THE TIMES
LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
75th Year

24 DECEMBER 1976
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(see also picture and caption on page 1635)

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What is Theology?
Maurice Wiles
This book is intended for those [illegible]

Oxford University Press

The genius of the suburbs

By Richard Shannon

DONALD J. OLSEN:
The Growth of Victorian London
384pp. Batsford. £10.50.

DEREK FRASER:
Urban Politics in Victorian England
324pp. Leicester University Press. £12.00.

GREGORY ANDERSON:
Victorian Clerks
145pp. Manchester University Press. £6.50.

Of all the portentous phenomena confronting the Victorians, the city stood out dominatingly, dwarfing everything else for both sheer size and frightening immediacy. Megalopolis excited wonder and fear: increasingly more of the latter than the former. To the Victorian pundits, the keepers of the Victorian cultural consciousness, the city stood highest in the list of regrettable and irreparable evils. From Carlyle to Ruskin, from Arnold to Morris, the prophets proclaimed woe and foretold doom. Today every university seminar on Victorian culture and Victorian literature sees the Victorian city through the eyes of these prophets and through the fictional modes most conformable to them: Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* is, of course, canonical; Conrad's *The Secret Agent* is a favourite; James's *Princess Casamassima* also; and of course, *Tono Bungay* by H. G. Wells and *Howards End* by Forster adding their Edwardian contributions to the tale of dislocated humanity, alienated consciousness, psychic disinheritance, distorted values.

The twentieth century has viewed this matter with a mixture of indignation and condescension. Three kinds of indignation: first, that the Victorians should have been so insensible as not to have appreciated the measured and civilized values of the Georgians and the Regency; second, that the Victorians should have constructed vast urban systems of squalor, misery and degradation; third, that they should have constructed so many square miles of vapid and banal and Pooterish suburb. The condescension comes from the assumption that their "modern" impulse is a great work of reparation and restitution, both aesthetic and social. "Victorian" became a convenient intellectual shorthand for "how not to do it".

But as the French wits used to say after 1870: "How beautiful the Republic looked under the Empire." After more than two generations of modernism doubts are provoked and disquiet increasingly voiced. Not the least fascinating thing about Donald Olsen's splendid book *The Growth of Victorian London* is that it represents both a revaluation of Victorian London and, explicitly as well as implicitly, a critique of post-Victorian attitudes and developments. The biter, as it were, is being bit. Professor Olsen's book thus represents a crucial turning-point in the scholarship of urbanism. An accumulating quantity of new perceptions and revised interpretations (as in *The Victorian City*, 1973, edited by Dyos and Wolff, to which Olsen contributed) has attained a point of critical mass and resulted in an explosion of qualitative energy. Consequently, it reads enjoyably, indeed, exhilaratingly. Consequently, also, it is full of the delightful surprises of opinions of commonsensical soundness which, in such special circumstances, assume to themselves the status of daring intellectual provocations. For example:

> In apportioning praise and blame for the condition of life in Victorian London we must remember that builders built buildings (and roads, and sewers, and railway lines, and bridges, and other physical things): they did not "build" poverty, inequality, disease, injustice, ignorance and other social evils.

This logical confusion of two quite distinct categories is the single greatest barrier to a proper appreciation of the Victorian urban achievement in London, and probably the single most important feature of Professor Olsen's exposition. But it presents as totally shameful what was a moderately admirable achievement by the London building industry: the creation, for the first time, and in considerable quantity, of housing designed from the outset for working-class occupation, with units small enough to make single family occupation of individual houses at least a possibility.

> Hitherto, the wage-earning or labouring classes had made do by partitioning large Georgian houses from which the middle class had migrated.

Again, how refreshing it is to have one's attention drawn to the point that the single greatest social fact of Victorian London was the emergence and expansion of the lower-middle class, defined classically as those families able to command the rudiments of genteel suburban living for a rent of £28 upwards annually. A respect, leaning towards affection, for both working-class and Pooterish suburbia is the prevailing characteristic of Professor Olsen's view of Victorian London. He is a master of what he calls the "topography of values". He can evoke, often through admirably chosen illustrations, moods and responses which do justice to the neglected qualities and virtues of Norwood, "and the localities between Camberwell and Sydenham"; of the more salubrious St John's Wood, full of authors, journalists and publishers; of the citadels of the City men, stockbrokers, commercial agents, merchants, in Tyburnia, Bayswater, Haverstock Hill, Brixton and Clapham; of that "Belgravia of South London", Denmark Hill; of those teeming haunts of clerkdom, Dalston, Brixton, New Cross, Forest Hill, Walthamstow, and Tottenham; of the City tradesmen in Kensington, Stockwell, Camberwell; and the "richer sort", in Balham, Highgate, Hampstead, Barnes, Richmond, and in "genteel Sydenham, famed for sylvan retreats".

> ...His intensive study of the conception and development of Chalcots, a somewhat hinterlandish area between St John's Wood and Haverstock Hill, and from Primrose Hill to Belsize Park, captures the "essence of suburbia", the decisive combination of architectural mediocrity and social success. This is precisely the sort of suburb designated by Sir John Summerson as a typical product of the collapse of the Georgian "rule of taste"; and one could find no better or more revealing or more convincing example of the kind of defensive response made by Professor Olsen to the kind of attack on Victorian values embodied most authoritatively in the eminent author of *Georgian London*.

Indeed, in general, a defence of Victorian London must be a defence of suburbia. Professor Olsen wisely makes no attempt at an elaborate case for the merits of Victorian urbanism. "The failure of the Victorians with their cities can perhaps be understood and even forgiven if it is borne in mind that their hearts were really not in city buildings." The Victorians never seriously attempted to compete with Second Empire Paris or *Franzjosephzeit* Vienna. On the contrary, they celebrated the domestic virtues of the villa, the semi-detached and the terrace against the vicious temptations of apartment blocks and boulevards, as in this magnificent specimen of Podsnappery of 1855:

> With what proud and excited feelings ... an Englishman ought to enter London after a prolonged absence in other countries! The public buildings are few, and for the most part, mean—the monuments of antiquity, not comparable to those which the prettiest town in Italy can boast—the palaces are sad rubbish!—the houses of dukes, peers and princes are shabby and shapeless heaps of brick. But what of all this? The spirit of London is in her thoroughfares—her population! What wealth, what cleanliness, what order, what animation! How majestic, yet how vivid is the life that runs through her myriad veins! ... how impressively do you feel that you are in the metropolis of the *free people*, with beautiful institutions and exulting still in the undecayed energies of national youth and vigour.

The Victorian genius was disenchanted with the city. For Victorians, urbanism meant the uniformity, regularity, symmetry, horizontality they inherited so massively and inescapably and irreplaceably from the Georgians. The Victorian rage against everything represented by Gower Street can never be properly understood unless it is realized that most Victorians for most of the Victorian era lived, willy-nilly, in Georgian houses. The very fact that they could offer no plausible alternative large-scale urban aesthetic condemned them to continue residential urban developments in an essentially Georgian (or sub-Georgian Italianate) mode. While Victorian aesthetes and moralists raged and stormed, Tyburnia, Belgravia, Bayswater, Kensington, Barnsbury and Islington imperturbably raised up their squares and circuses in plaster and paint and sham façades in the most conventional manner. Efforts to break away into Gothic or Elizabethan styles (Lonsdale Square, Islington, or St Ann's Villas, Notting Hill) failed to turn the tide.

It was not until the great Cadogan Estate developments from 1870 which lured wealth and fashion towards Sloane Square and the King's Road that Norman Shaw Queen Anne and Pont Street Dutch made a decisive breach in the Georgian residential monopoly. The disdainful abdication of the architects ("what is really the architectural talent of the day, has nothing to do with the character of Victorian London") left the field clear to social snobbery with its leanings towards architectural conservatism and, above all, to the speculative builders, whose views on architecture remained traditional. It took the best part of a generation of incessant badgering and hectoring of the architects, aesthetes and moralists before the builders and their clients were made sufficiently ashamed of themselves and learnt to love the gospel of Gothicry, Queen Annery, eclectic terracottadom and brickish polychromaticism in a general atmosphere of picturesque asymmetry and multiform verticality.

It is, of course, of the essence of our present anxious ponderings about what the architects, aesthetes and moralists of modernism have done to us and our environment, to bear in mind that much the best things that happened in residential London in the Victorian era were achieved by speculative tradesmen and conventional snobs.

The Victorians realized their genius in the suburb. The suburb must be seen, rightly insists Professor Olsen, "not as a failed attempt to be either town or country, but as an environment fundamentally different from either, with distinctive attributes and needs". Again, trenchant sense on the new suburbanites and their taste: "Because the new tenants ought not to have liked such houses, it is assumed that they did not. Such thinking about popular taste is still common among those who would like to combine aesthetic elitism with social egalitarianism, and for whom nothing is more distressing than the thought that the majority may really prefer mediocrity to excellence." A much more productive line of inquiry, he suggests, would be to ask what sort of satisfactions the houses actually built, purchased, and inhabited, did provide: "what aspirations were fulfilled, what values expressed, what kinds of behaviour encouraged".

Professor Olsen is engaged, really, in the kind of critique associated with historians such as Butterfield or Namier against the "Whig interpretation of history". The Whig interpretation of Victorian London is a matter essentially of concentrating attention on evils and shortcoming on the one hand and, on the other, in stressing its achievements as being preludes and groping towards the redemptions of the modern movement. He cites F. M. L. Thompson also in condemning the "teleological structure" of recent studies of working class housing, "in which Victorian failures, however understandable and explicable, point on inexorably to the only conceivable answer to the housing of the working class, twentieth-century council housing".

The Growth of Victorian London is certainly to be commended for offering such a necessary and desirable corrective general reinterpretation; and equally for the interpretative pattern it offers of the Victorian civic sensibility: the accelerating tempo of the urges towards division of labour, multiplicity of services, class segregation, exuberant variety of pleasures. But its special pleasures, like the pleasures of Victorian London itself, are as much in its details, its corners, its back streets, its grand hotels, its railways stations, its restaurants, its omnibuses and trams, its workmen's railways, its great department stores and music halls. The final message: it is to the Victorians that we owe the fact that London remains the best great city to live in the world.

By contrast, Derek Fraser's study of Victorian urban politics explores a provincial dimension: Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, with Nottingham and some others in supporting roles. Moreover, it is a provincial dimension sufficient unto itself, which did not look to the metropolis for guidance and inspiration. "Politics for Victorians, unlike ourselves, began not at Westminster but at their own front gates." Vestries and churchwardens, Church and Dissent, the Poor Law, municipal improvements, highway surveyors, education, city councils were matters of as much, if not more, concern to Victorians than great issues of national politics. Dr Fraser's main thesis is to demonstrate the way in which, as cities developed, these local questions and the authorities responsible for them became politicized. The political processes he describes are "inhabited primarily by middle-class activists". And he is quite clear that the evidence he presents "does not support the interpretation that the politics of city life in the middle decades of the nineteenth century were dominated by a class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat". The contest for power here revealed is either within the urban middle-class itself or between an urban elite and landed gentry.

Urban Politics in Victorian England is a highly sophisticated analysis, full of meat as an egg. It offers for consideration a new mode of historical methodology, differentiating four levels of investigation: parochial and township administration; municipal government; parliamentary elections; and extra-parliamentary political agitation. And its findings are important for our general understanding of what Victorian politics was really about as far as the mass of Victorians were concerned: "*Pace* Edward Thompson, 1832 did not mark the emergence of the English working class and this is just the reason why proletarian issues formed relatively so minor a role in urban politics in Victorian England." That was essentially a post-1880 development, which did not mature until the 1920s. Dr Fraser's study is an impressively weighty testimony in one of our most fraught areas of historical debate.

Lastly, Gregory Anderson's investigation of the rise of the Victorian clerks as a socially and professionally recognizable category relates appositely to both the Olsen and the Fraser studies. Again, it constitutes a protest against "Whig" (or socialist) interpretations. Clerks might well be described as the heart of the lower middle class; Pooter himself, after all, was a clerk. They gave their particular character to some of the most symptomatic suburbs of the great Victorian conurbations. It is high time they were accorded historical recognition. In an era dominated by study of working-class ideology and political radicalism, of Chartism and trade unionism, this kind of redress is to be welcomed. Carr-Saunders and Wilson in the 1930s, Lewis and Maude and others in the 1950s, and since, pointed the way in more general and conceptual terms to a historical sociology of the professional classes; Dr Anderson's study *Victorian Clerks*, modest in scale but highly specific in manner, is a good example of the kind of intensive investigation now needed to add the necessary density to the texture of our understanding of social groups and classes in a modernizing society.

The revival of the house

By Nikolaus Pevsner

ANDREW SAINT:
Richard Norman Shaw
497pp. Yale University Press. £19.50.

I read Andrew Saint's *Richard Norman Shaw*, and am now writing about it, sitting at my desk in No 12 Bloomsbury Square. The book is a volume in the series of monographs admirably produced by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, and it deserves concentrated study.

Perhaps the genius of the place will help. No 12 is on the west side of the square, No 20 on the north side is the Paul Mellon Centre, and the former No 29, close to the north corner of the east side, was Norman Shaw's office from 1876 onwards. That side is now the Victoria Liverpool Friendly Society, and the building is of the kind of classicism which for public or altogether major buildings became the fashion in Edwardian and post-Edwardian England. To a substantial degree Norman Shaw was responsible for this fashion, though when he moved to Bloomsbury Square he designed in a very different, far more original and far more hopeful way.

Mr Saint does not agree with me in this evaluation of early as against late Norman Shaw. When he began his book, a monograph was already in existence: Sir Reginald Blomfield's book which came out in 1940. For Blomfield—and no wonder if one knows his own style of designing—the development of Shaw's style is a steady ascent leading to classicism at its climax. I reviewed Blomfield's book (*The Architectural Review*, LXXXIX, 1941) taking the opposite line: regret for the downfall of a brilliant architect. Shaw, I argued, was on his way out of historicism and into a new style for the new century, when classicism tempted him back into period imitation. Andrew Saint belongs to a younger generation, the generation for which both Blomfield's and my own position are "a little out of date", and he continues: "If the reader of this book feels obliged to choose between these interpretations, he will find that Shaw's own sentiments, at least over his last twenty-five years, tended towards Blomfield's view of the matter. But he need not make such a choice; this is meant to be firstly a work of biography, and only secondarily one of art history."

But can such a division be made? We shall see; meanwhile here is a plenitude of facts forcing home the insufficiency of Blomfield's book and of my review. Mr Saint's monograph has nearly 500 pages of text, over 800 notes, a catalogue of 200 items and nearly 300 illustrations. There can be no question that Norman Shaw deserved all this. His is a large oeuvre, and nearly every building which he designed is aesthetically successful and historically important. Mr Saint calls him an eclectic, and one must agree; he also censures "those who look upon an eclecticism which works by instinct rather than intellectual choice as mindless", and there also one must agree. But if an eclectic in architecture is a man who uses divers styles for divers functions, then surely intellectual choice is bound to dictate which style for which function.

The assortment of styles made use of by Norman Shaw is exceptionally rich and exceptionally pertinent. One can comfortably follow their development in Mr Saint's book. Mr Saint describes them well, and he never seems to be in a hurry. Some writers knowing less of nineteenth-century architecture tend to divide the century into three phases: the Classical Revival, the Gothic Revival and the Domestic Revival. The first of these is at its best from about 1800 to the 1830s, the second is the period from the building of the Houses of Parliament to the Law Courts, the third from Morris's Red House to the early years of the twentieth century. Norman Shaw was born in 1831: he was a child when the Grecian began to recede, and in his early thirties at the culmination of the Gothic Revival. For churches of course the Gothic Revival held out much longer, but Norman Shaw (in spite of designing eighteen churches) could write to Sedding in 1886: "I am not a Church man, I am a house man, and soil pipes are my speciality." Shaw was not joking. He was interested in plumbing as he was interested in electric lighting and in the structural use of iron and concrete—first mass concrete, then reinforced concrete (Portland House, 1908).

In turning over the pages of Mr Saint's catalogue it becomes patently clear that Shaw was indeed a house man. It is true that he designed Scotland Yard and much later the Piccadilly Hotel, and much earlier New Zealand Chambers, but they are rarities. Most of the rest is houses—country houses, then town houses. Yet the three other buildings are of considerable significance, too: New Zealand Chambers as an endeavour to introduce into the City the character and the motifs of his Chelsea houses, particularly "Ipswich windows" (ie, the tripartite windows of Sparrowes House at Ipswich dating from c 1670). The charm of New Zealand Chambers we would now have found irresistible, but the City resisted and New Zealand Chambers had only one successor: Baring's in Bishopsgate.

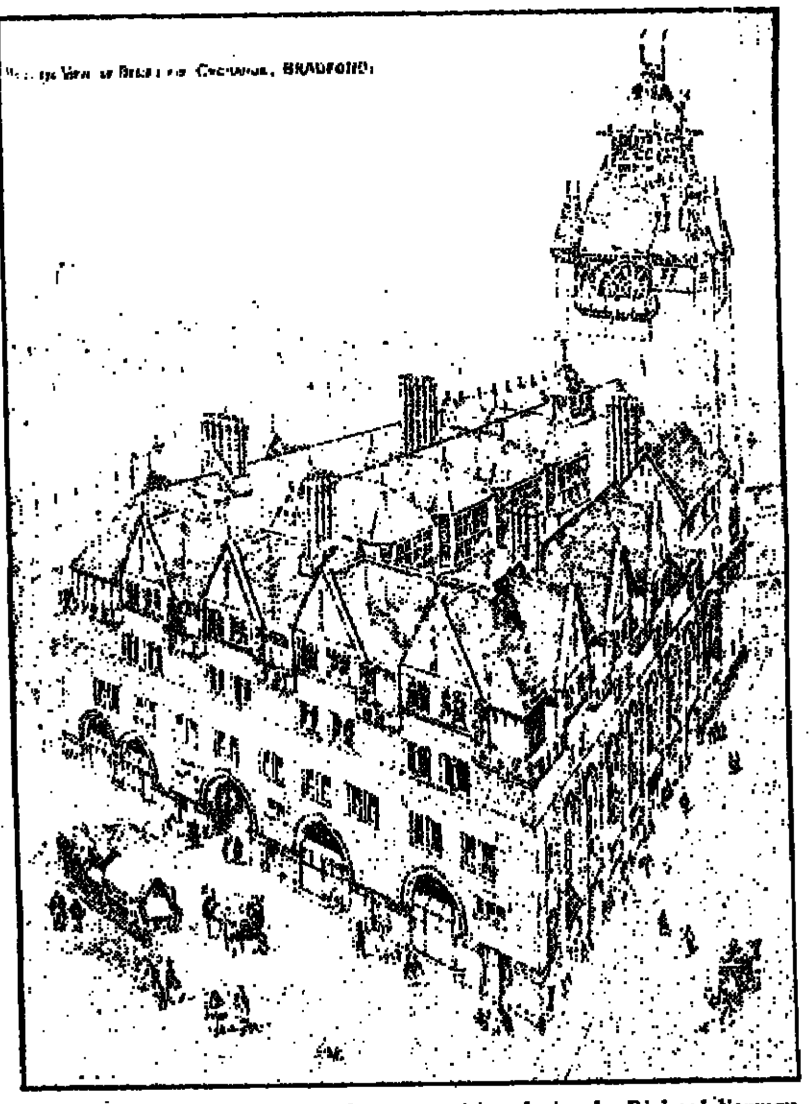
One remembers Scotland Yard and the Piccadilly Hotel, as examples of Shaw's versatility. Scotland Yard was designed in 1886, the Piccadilly Hotel in 1905. At the same time as the Piccadilly Hotel, the extension to the Bradford Town Hall went up, and this is the most surprising demonstration of Shaw's versatility—one row of windows in obvious imitation of High Victorian Gothic (à la Street), the row of windows immediately above Queen Anne but with rococo balconies, other windows mullioned but the dormers Louis XII, and as Shaw's signature, a tall oriel with five transoms. The building is far too little known.

Fifty years before, Shaw used High Victorian Gothic but not in this selfconscious way. Indeed, it was his panacea during the years 1859-62, when he worked in Street's office, and when Street's was probably the best office. Mr Saint goes further. He writes that Street "bade fair to be Europe's greatest architect". However that may be, Street was a serious, powerful designer and Shaw profited greatly from him. His Bingley church—recently demolished for no very valid reason—is up to the best Street ever did, and it overcame Shaw's earlier Gothic endeavours which had been inspired by the flamboyance of Burges. If one now compares Bingley with Shaw's most important church, St Michael Bedford Park of about fifteen years later, it is evident that Shaw had found a way out of historicism. The chief elements of St Michael are of Jacobean descent, but handled with superb licence.

In his secular buildings that licence was achieved more than ten years earlier. As at that time Shaw was in partnership, or rather office community, with the slightly older Eden Nesfield, it cannot be said with any certainty—not even by Mr Saint—who invented or adopted which novel features. The situation at that moment was in any case complicated. Shaw worked towards the type of country house which Mr Saint calls Old English, whereas Nesfield, apart from similar experiments, began to use the later so-called Queen Anne, first for lodges and cottages and then on the grand scale for Kinmel Park. The real origin of Kinmel Park and the lodges of Regent's Park and Kew Gardens is the Anglo-Dutch style of 1630-70.

We come now to the decade of Shaw's most characteristic country houses such as Preen Manor, Merrist Wood, Pierpoint, Adcote. Brick, some tile-hanging, some genuine or imitation timber-framing and a large bay window with transoms as well as mullions. The style caught on fabulously, and no wonder; for here was something happy in the Jacobean tradition yet not imitative, and highly original and delightfully picturesque into the bargain. Add to all this the scale and the situation in the north-country forests of Cragside, and no one will doubt that Shaw's houses in this style will one day be as popular as anything built in the older styles.

So the Old English alone would secure for Norman Shaw a leading position in the Domestic Revival, but there is another group of houses yet more adventurous. These are the town houses of the same period, the 1870s. They, in my opinion, are from the point of view of general architectural history the climax of Shaw's oeuvre. Most of them are either in Hampstead or in Chelsea. The beginning is marked by the house in Ellerdale Road which Shaw built for himself in 1874. Here are asymmetrical placing of windows, asymmetrical relations between a polygonal bay and a shallower bay with three tiers of Ipswich windows. It is a subtle, very elegant design, and it almost looks like a trial trip for the three Embankment houses: Cheyne House (1875-77), Swan House (1875-77) and Clock House (1878-80), all three momentous for further developments in England and abroad. If I had to choose just one building to establish Shaw's stature, it would be Swan House. As for Mr Saint, his choice would probably be different. It might even be a choice dictated by function, not by style. In any case he deals in great detail with Bedford Park (1877 etc) as the earliest garden



Bird's-eye perspective view of a competition design by Richard Norman Shaw for Bradford Exchange, 1864; from the book reviewed here.

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suburb and with the Albert Hall Mansions as an early block of luxury flats (1879-86).

With this we are about halfway through the book. Indeed Mr Saint marks this place by two chapter headings: "Turning Point" and "The Path to Classicism". But that oversimplifies the situation. I would single out two groups of buildings as standing between the Swan House group and classicism. To the first belong the gabled houses in Queen's Gate, beginning with No 196 and followed by No 180 and No 174. As they are terrace houses wedged in by houses of the normal mid-nineteenth-century stuccoed type compositionally continuing the Georgian manner, the gables—the chief motif—are an affront against the Georgian tradition. Historically they connect Queen's Gate with Dutch work of the seventeenth century. I would attach to this group the Alliance Assurance in Pall Mall (1881-88) and Scotland Yard (1886 etc), both gabled and also both with angle tourelles and horizontal stripes of light and dark materials. "Polychrome layering" is what Mr Saint calls it.

The second group of these years of transition has more justification for being included in the chapter on the path to classicism, though it would have been characterized more convincingly as on the path to neo-early-Georgian. This being so, Mr Saint should have placed among the immediate sources Shaw's former partner of the late 1860s and early 1870s, Eden Nesfield. In Shaw's oeuvre the key buildings of that group are Bolney House, Kensington (1883), and the yet more important No 170 Queen's Gate of 1887-88. Shaw here attacked his own gabled houses in the same street. He presented hipped roofs and long, slim sash windows, and it is indeed quite possible, as Mr Saint suggests, that Fred White, the owner of No 70, was responsible for these innovations. We know that White had gone to Webb first, and that Webb had dissuaded him by stressing how despotic an architect he was.

But on Webb more will have to be said after Shaw's real classicism has been commented on. The key buildings for the latter are Bryanston 1889-94, Chesters 1890-94 and the Piccadilly Hotel 1905-08. One of the favourite motifs in these buildings is alternately blocked columns—Belcher had used them before Shaw—and they are in this profusion more Edwardian than Georgian. Mr Saint analyses these last principal buildings extremely well. In fact, he pleads for a revaluation of Shaw's late phase. In this context he refers, not without appreciation, to Reginald Blomfield, Blomfield, though not a pupil of Shaw, finally carried out the Regent Street Quadrant. The sad story of the Quadrant Mr Saint tells in all its details, and he does so with warmth.

Shaw was very generous to his pupils. Of Lethaby he said: "It is I who am [his] pupil" and he gave Avon Tyrell to him as a first job. All the stranger therefore that Lethaby and indeed others of Shaw's best pupils were drawn more to Philip Webb than to Shaw. Webb and Shaw were the same age, they had both worked in Street's office, and they both, in nearly all their early work, belong to the Domestic Revival. They respected each other, though in character they were about as different as could be. Shaw looked like an ambassador, Webb in the end was a tweed-clad old cottager, chopping his own wood and drawing his own water. Shaw was, so Mr Saint writes, "so charming and so meticulously correct that few prospective clients could resist him", and even if he confessed to his wife: "I dearly like my own way and not other people's", he would have been incapable of Webb's downright rudeness to potential clients.

Webb's sympathy with the Shaw style was limited. He admitted that Shaw did "good and serious work", but he calls the style "dilettante-picturesque" and "exceedingly artificial". Shaw's sympathy with Webb was no greater: "A very able man indeed, but with a strong liking for the ugly." The most telling illustration of these contrasts is the building of the Central School of Arts and Crafts. The initiative for this novel concept came from the Shaw group, and especially Lethaby, but the uncouth features of the building probably derived from Webb's Raunton and Clouds.

Not that Webb and Shaw always disagreed. Here they are for instance on Palladio—Shaw: "Little or nothing in my way"; Webb: "Skilful but dismal skill." Then on Bentley's Westminster Cathedral—Webb: "My admiration for Bentley's great work rests mainly on the splendid rashness of design in the buttressing of the dormers . . . this can hardly be spoiled by the future decorative work"; and Shaw: "Beyond all doubt the finest church that has been built for centuries. . . . Superb in scale and character."

Was Webb ever inspired by Shaw? Hardly; but Shaw may have got quite a lot from Webb. I will give some examples. Webb's very first job, Red House for William Morris, has, in spite of its Gothic and Butterfieldian connotations, long, slim sash windows of the Queen Anne type. That was while Shaw was still producing his flamboyant Burgesy Gothic. Also sashes painted white were, according to Emery Walker, "an innovation begun by the firm", i e, Morris and Co, i e, Webb. An early example of a room painted white was the drawing-room of No 26 Queen Square, the date being 1865. That is also the date of Webb's house in Palace Green, a terrace house with the boldest mixture of Gothic and Queen Anne motifs; and finally Smeaton Manor by Webb is William and Mary in style with its hipped roof and sash windows and dating from 1877-78; that is, five years before Shaw's Bolney House. Mr Saint does not list the dependences of Shaw on Webb, though one way or another they appear in his book, and if the reader may not always know where, between Shaw and Webb, Mr Saint's sympathy lies, he should read on to the very last sentence, which is after all the last sentence of a book on Shaw: "There was some sorrow at [Shaw's] departure, but none of the sobbing that would be heard upon the death of Philip Webb."

Mating season

HILARY AND MARY EVANS:
The Party that Lasted 100 Days
The Late Victorian Season: A Social Study
162pp. Macdonald and Jane's. £5.95.

"[illegible] such a world?" the scoffer [illegible] who has been surfeited with 'Society' novels (so called) etc. I answer 'Yes' unhesitatingly." Hilary and Mary Evans are just as convinced as this anonymous columnist from *The Ladies' Realm* in 1896, and in *The Party that Lasted 100 Days* they have reconstructed [illegible] the features of late Victorian society [illegible] that to anyone not actually within the charmed circle has always seemed stranger than fiction.

Although not formalized by a calendar entry, "the Season" was regulated with terrifying formality by custom and practice. It lasted [illegible] three months from the end of April and provided an opportunity for the [illegible] aristocracy to [illegible]. The interaction of town and country is important in this context: as the authors point out, "the Season" made a temporary village of the West End of London, with Hyde Park, St James's Park, and Piccadilly, as its main boundaries, and excursions outwards only to certain selected social occasions, such as Ascot, Goodwood, Lord's (for the Eton and Harrow match) and, more curiously, the Henley Regatta.

All the ritualistic details of card-leaving, social calls, balls, and "drums", are here, together with some terribly good advice from the etiquette books ("Soup is eaten out of a plate, and with a spoon"), and enhanced by wonderfully well-chosen engravings from late nineteenth-century periodicals. "It's foolish but it's fun", the authors decide is a *suitable* epitaph for "the Season". There will be disagreement about that, but not about this attractive, unpretentious monograph which is lots of fun and far from foolish.

Peter Keating

Remember the muffin-man

By E. S. Turner

VALERIE JENKINS (Editor):
Where I Was Young
Memories of London Childhoods
Drawings by George Murray
161pp. Hart-Davis, MacGibbon. £4.95.

Valerie Jenkins had the happy idea of inviting a number of London-reared people—some of them kenspeckle figures, some not—to revisit their childhood haunts and reminisce about the lives they lived there. Of those she selected, quite *a few*—like V. S. Pritchett, Elisabeth Lutyens, Jessie Matthews, Muriel Box, Louis Heren, Dorothy Scannell and, inevitably, Sir John *Betjeman*—had already written about their childhood, but were willing to be jogged into further recollections. One or two, like Dame Edith Evans ("I'm not a go-backer"), had to have their arms gently twisted before agreeing to play.

Obviously there was a risk that too many would recall the same things: the muffin men, the Chinese laundries, the falling zeppelin, the reek of horse dung, the straw laid on the street to deaden noise for the dying. Muffin men do haunt these pages (without being allowed to run riot) but the only reference to *straw in the street is by Monica* Dickens, who says that when she was born in Notting Hill this privilege was accorded to her mother. This is fascinating news: straw for lying-in as well as for dying?

How, one always wonders, was this facility laid on? Was council and police permission necessary? Did the family doctor sign a recommendation? Was it an indulgence for paid-up ratepayers only? Not the least virtue of this book is that it prompts such speculations. To take another example: how widespread was the custom of wrapping *cold towels round the heads of swotting* schoolboys to "cool their brains", as practised by V. S. Pritchett's neighbours in Dulwich? Does it happen still?

When possible, Valerie Jenkins took her charges back into the houses where they lived. In one of Kingsley Amis's homes in Norbury "Mrs Tant was not a bit surprised *to see us*". *She knew the Amis* connection "because *Panorama* once photographed the house when they did Amis and Braine in a sort of Rags-to-Reactionaries programme". Mr Amis observed that a "bloody great oak tree" in the garden had been cut down. Yes, said Mrs Tant, your tree was diseased and cost £70 to fell. In another Amis home lived six Jamaicans, "extremely jolly and welcoming". A tablet on the living-room wall said: "Christ the *Lord is Head of This House*". *While* in Norbury Amis checked that all his books were stocked by the local library. "He didn't exactly say I Like It Here, but he chuckled all the time."

Less fortunate was Mary Stocks. Her birthplace in Queen's Gate Terrace, Kensington, houses the Institut Français. "Sadly, to the detriment of Anglo-French relations, Baroness Stocks was refused admittance." So she stood on the doorstep reminiscing about the nursery *in the attic* and how her physician father (who had wanted to join the Navy) kept the Navy List for his patients to read: "he could not understand anybody failing to find the Navy List enthralling". From Lady *Stocks Miss Jenkins picked* up the word banausic (long a favourite with "Peter Simple") to describe Philistine new buildings in Kensington.

Elisabeth Lutyens was allowed into her old home in Bedford Square, now housing the London School of Hygiene and Tropical *Medicine. She did not relish* the linoleum or the bright lighting, but, like other go-backers, was impelled by the central heating to *wonder* how her generation had ever survived the winters.

Exceptional hospitality *awaited* Philip Hope-Wallace in his old Wimbledon home. There was tea with hot buttered roasted chestnuts *in the study where his father* used to give Shakespeare readings, hogging the main parts for himself and his wife. When a lady *complained* that she was given only messenger's parts, he said: "Well, what does she expect? She's only a builder's daughter." It seems that *Swinburne* once kissed Mr Hope-Wallace's sister in her pram, for which the *Alsatian nanny* beat his head with an umbrella. This admirable woman was packed home in the First World War for being a Hun. Mr Hope-Wallace is the only one in this gallery to mention hearing the guns of the Western Front in London.

Predictably, those returning to the East End were saddened by graffiti, shuttered shops, deserted "walk*ways*", *heartless blocks of flats* and general desolation. They professed to miss the noise and friendliness of communal street life, though the noise may well have been less endearing than it seems in retrospect. If the West End is banausic, what word can describe *today's* East End?

To try to make social generalizations from this *entertaining* book (the pieces originally appeared in the *Evening Standard*) would be inappropriate. It is for dipping into and is full of delights. Miss Jenkins clearly has the art of getting people to talk, while staying modestly in the *background*. A *pity she found* some of Sir John Betjeman's comments on Highgate's architecture "too acerbic to relate".

Epitaphs of empire

By Jan Morris

THEON WILKINSON:
Two Monsoons
240pp. Duckworth. £5.95.

Last month I finished writing a protracted work about the British Empire, and the question that remained uppermost in my mind at the end of *it was this: was the* whole enterprise worth while? Were the prizes worth the sacrifice? Was the end worthy of the means? Or was the entire adventure from start to finish a colossal misjudgment, a tragic expenditure of lives, skills and loves upon an unnecessary purpose? If ever a Camões arrives to immortalize our epic, it will perhaps be this nagging suggestion of waste and misapplication that will provide his theme. As it used to say upon the most celebrated mausoleum in Calcutta, *before the vandals* defaced it:

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

These speculations were powerfully and often movingly stimulated by Theon Wilkinson's book about the imperial dead in India. The blurb calls *Two Monsoons* macabre, but I did not find it so: terrible sometimes, marvellous too, but mostly plain pathetic—so many young lives lost, so many partings endured, such miserable endings in such alien places, and through it all, *almost unbroken*, the conviction that everything was justifiable, if not for the good of the natives, at least for the state of the bank balance, the honour of the Crown, the chance of a husband, the demonstration of Christian superiority or *the prospect of some decent pig-sticking.*

Actually the public impulses figure *least in Two Monsoons*, and this is not surprising. Death the old leveller reduces most pretensions to their common denominator, the pursuit of happiness. British motives in India were often frank enough—the Indian Civil Service attitude *of self-admiring sanctity* was by no means universal—and the group portrait that emerges from this unparalleled funerary collection is not one of rulers, nabobs or reformers but essentially of fallible humans and loyal families, struggling to make life tolerable in a ghastly climate far from home.

Mr Wilkinson says the book wrote itself, and it does rather have that headlong feeling. He has tried to categorize his lapidations, but the result is really hardly more than a bulging notebook of facts, anecdotes and allusions concerning the deaths, burials and memorials of the British and other Europeans in India. The two monsoons of the excellent title *come from* an old adage about an Englishman's life expectancy in his Indian empire, and the book certainly demonstrates that the life of the imperialist, though not always nasty, and certainly not invariably brutish, was *indeed likely to be short.*

Have you ever heard, for instance, about the slaughter of 188 Britons in cold blood by the frightful German mercenary Walter Reinhart in 1763—an episode far more hideous than the Black Hole, yet long *forgotten*? Did you know that in 1880 the Victoria Hotel at Naini-Tal, together with the assembly rooms, the library, the orderly room and Mr Bell's shop were all precipitated into the neighbouring lake by a landslide, causing 151 deaths? Did you know that in 1912, in the Hazaribagh District alone, sixteen people were killed by *tigers, two by leopards*, six by bears, eighty-six by wolves, two by hyenas and 123 by snakes?

It is a desperate register. We read of deaths by nightmare, disease and unthinkable remedy, of deaths by lightning, duelling, shipwreck, train crash, alcoholism and too much dancing in the heat. A group of British soldiers commits mass suicide at *Senchal*. *Private* James Daly, Connaught Rangers, is shot for mutiny at Jullundur. People are blown up by exploding soda-water bottles, are dropped inadvertently from palanquins, dive into empty swimming-pools or are *assassinated by fanatics.*

The epitaphs Mr Wilkinson has so diligently collected seldom match the best *examples at home*, but some are memorable. I like the sly text, for instance, on the memorial at Peshawar to an officer accidentally shot by his orderly in 1870: "Well done, good and faithful servant." There is grandeur to the *epitaph of G. Forster of* Nagpore, "the strengthener of the Empire, the preserver of the country, possessed of intrepidity", and true poignancy to that of the four children, none surviving more than *a year, of the Curtis family of Kas*auli:

And we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die,
And where our father's ashes be,
Our own may never lie.

The book is often repetitious, and I have news for Mr Wilkinson—the verses "Never the lotus closes, never the wildfowl wake", which he quotes on his title-page, are most distinctly not by Miles Irving. But it is a work full of charm, surprise and *compassion*, *delight*fully illustrated by the line drawings of Bill Smith, and it will give much pleasure to aficionados both mortuary and imperial. Also if it reinforced me at first in my speculations about the truth of Empire, *it confirmed me in the end* in my conclusions. I have come to feel that in all such immense historical movements the goodness never goes to waste, only the evil; and out of the unnumbered small tragedies recounted here, out of the generations of devotion Mr Wilkinson records, some contribution was made, I do not doubt, to the divine repository.

Of all the deaths *he commemor*ates the saddest is the last: that of Lieutenant William Morley, killed by rioters on September 22, 1947. It was all over then, all but gone—all but discredited too—yet young Mr Morley made the sacrifice none the less. Was his death *merely* a chronological mistake, one of fate's inaccuracies? I don't believe it. History can't *all* be bunk.

Volume 5 of the revived *Victoria History of the County of Middlesex* (424pp. Institute of Historical Research/Oxford University Press. £35), *edited* by R. B. Pugh *continues* the topographical coverage of the county, dealing with part of Gore Hundred (Hendon, Kingsbury, Great and Little Stanmore) and Edmonton Hundred (Edmonton, Enfield, Monken Hadley, South *Mimms* and *Tottenham*). The volume provides the vast mine of material to which we have become accustomed, with information ranging from the original Anglo-Saxon settlement called Totta's ham to the frequency of Hendon's tram ser*vices in the early years of the* twentieth century.

A Barnum and Bailey world

By Russell Davies

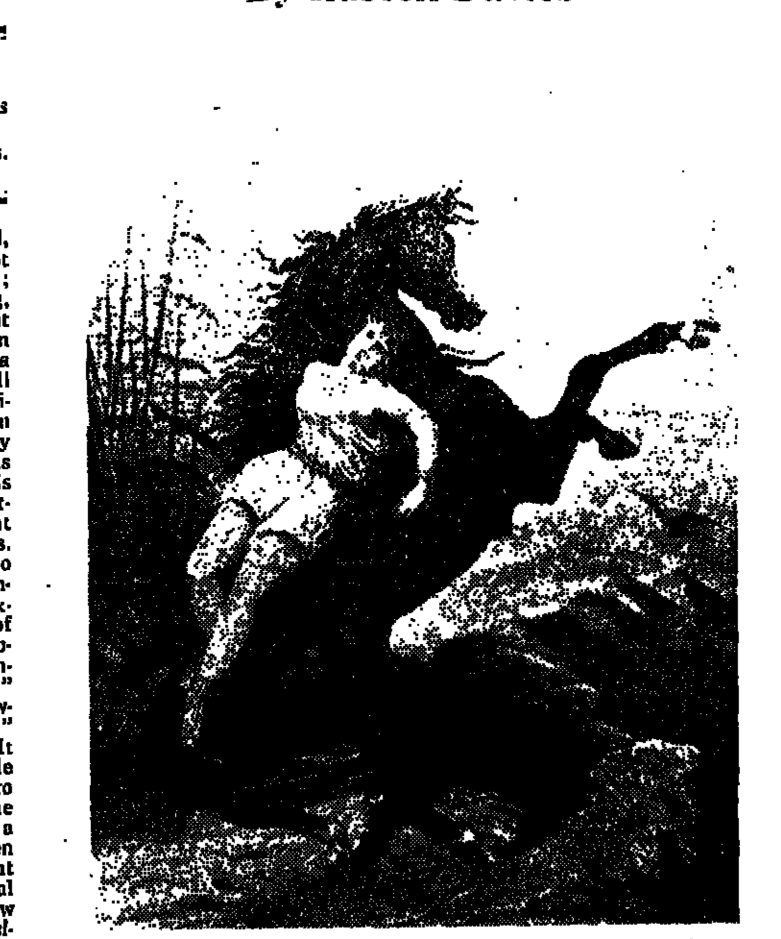
ROBERT C. TOLL:
On with the Show
The First Century of Show Business in America
361pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.

"It's a Barnum and Bailey world, just as phoney as it can be." Not an opinion to be trusted, of course; for, being part of an old pop song, it belongs to that world itself. But what was only fatalistic mooning in the old song has now become a fashionable cynicism, and not at all an unjustified one; the proposition that America has long been fashioning a Barnum and Bailey world for itself, and for others, is not easily set aside. But then it is not often discussed at all. The outside world is perhaps too content to be amused by America's antics. There is certainly plenty of fun to be derived from all the barnstorming and bandwagoning and packaging of reputations. The source of most recent enjoyment was probably Ronald Reagan, the brilliantined (some said dyed) "craggy" (a very bandwagon word) ex-cowboy-star (and before that, "Dutch" Reagan, the sports commentator). It was probably a relief to most people brought up in the English system to see this fun-figure discarded at the last, though not by much, and a patently bad self-promoter chosen as candidate at his expense. But anyone who watched presidential election-night television, and saw the mother of the eventual president-to-be, posing for interviews beside a mock-up pot-bellied stove in her own little cardboard corner of the South, will not be so complacent as to suppose that American attitudes to public life are getting pretty much like ours after all. They are not.

The *wish* to believe in the figure admired is far stronger (and it has been easier to exploit). The desire to express belief is therefore immeasurably more fervent. One need only listen to the average studio audience for an imported American comedy or variety show (taking care to select one that relies on genuinely unboosted audience-reaction) to hear a wild, hyperbolic noise such as an English audience never matches, unless it is composed of maidens in the grip of that very different and quite uninteresting *hysteria inspired by pop groups.* The American cheer has a distinct strain of "love-me" yearning in it, as though the audience desired the approval of the performer even more than they wanted to show him theirs.

This raucous sycophancy is strange enough to lead one to suspect that their prominent people *mean something rather different to* Americans than do ours to us. And in fact, it is not difficult to construct a theory of traditional collective insecurity whereby the American nation, having invented in the first instance a powerful *and morale-boosting means of ad*vertising its own virtues to itself ("*the* show business", it used to be called), then begins to convince itself that the nation with the best show business necessarily has the liveliest virtues to extol by means *of it: and thus America becomes*, for good or ill, the nation that believes in its own publicity.

To some extent, at least, the history of American show business must be the history of American self-deception, which means that it is of the highest interest — though, of course, if you judge it by the total volume of its literature, it is also a treasure-house *of footling* blurbism and fake scholarship. Robert C. Toll's new book is better than this, if, in the end, rather an unspeculative plod; but where it is really useful is in pointing out how full of sadnesses and dishonours *were the first hundred years of "the* business". Most of the dishonours, naturally, hung about the person of P. T. Barnum, whose career confirms that there is no business like show business while destroying utterly the idea that everything about it is appealing. Barnum it was who, during the height of the nineteenth-century craze for freak-shows-cum-"educational"-exhibits, would make room for new customers in his crammed museums by exhibiting a large sign: "To the Egress". *Fascinated ticket-holders, following* the route to this amazing new curi-



Adah Isaacs Menken as Mazeppa (above) and Fanny Brice: from On with the Show

osity, found of course that it led them briskly down the back stairs and out into the street. But such was Barnum's command of the *psychology of advertising that* he was soon able to number a reputation for hoaxes of this kind among the positive reasons for his appeal. "First he humbugs them", Toll tells of a Barnum huckster reporting, "and then they pay to hear him tell them *how he did it.*" (They are hoping for the same favour from Nixon.) This was possibly the first real outbreak of the Incorrigibility Boast, which has become a lasting feature (cf the song "My Way") of the American psychology of performance.

The incorrigibility principle is always at work somewhere in an *American* performer's relationship with his audience, if only in the sense that they love him so much more obviously than we do for himself, rather than his performance. It is not infallibly true, but it is truer in America than elsewhere, *that* audiences would rather be croaked at by a "living legend" than thrilled by the high C's of a tyro; and they would rather be conned than be left feeling that nothing much had happened. The triumph of Barnum's fraudulence *in the case of the "Egress"* sign was to make nothing-happening into a happening: a process that has developed into the "media-event", wherein the drumming up of publicity for the occasion almost becomes the occasion itself. *Showmen from Howard Hughes to* Evel Knievel have proved that the event need not occur at all, certainly not in the manner or to the extent *foreseen.*

Barnum, at any rate, was the Patron Sinner of his profession. "When his two giants got in a fist fight", Toll writes, "Barnum was furious, not because they might hurt each other but because they *did it in private.*" *But for all the* relentlessness of his media-minded opportunism, he does not in himself do much to explain the exaggerated personal devotion which performers have enjoyed in America since his time. Actually though, *this tendency may pre-date* Barnum, as Toll is able to imply in the course of his history of more honourable theatrical traditions.

These came alive, it seems, at the time of the celebrated rivalry between the London tragedian William Macready and the American upstart Edwin Forrest, who, during a British tour in 1845, "hissed one *of Macready's performances* and then publicly defended his hissing as a perfectly legitimate response of a displeased patron". When Forrest returned to America the following year he was acclaimed as a hero, and on Macready's next visit *to the United States*, in 1848, he was consistently bombarded with agrarian produce. The Cincinnati barrage, for example, culminated in the gallery's attempt to stun Macready with the half carcass of a sheep. There followed the celebrated *Astor Place Riot* between the highbrows and the low, after which, though the entertainment industry seems to have fragmented considerably, there can be no doubt that most of its branches felt a new freedom to express belligerent *American-ness* in their displays.

There is an element of nationalism and self-identification in all *countries*, of course, between the public and its best-established favourites, but in America this has always been particularly near the surface. In a country rapidly filling with eager strangers, it was for a long time, and possibly still is, the *responsibility* of show-business people to give Americans their most vivid behavioural notion of what being an American ought to entail. In the *classic American* entertainment-act there is always an element of exhortation. Even Harry Houdini, *necessarily* dumb in the throes of his routine, gave lectures in which his recorded words sound like the typical hard-nosed sense of the self-made immigrant grafter:

I'm a New Yorker; was born in Harlem, where I still live. I began my *stage career* as a magician some fifteen years ago, and gradually worked into this branch of work. I have made a study of locks for years, and I can usually tell at a glance at a lock just what mechanism it is. *Of course I have a secret method* of picking locks. That's my business.

At the time when T. S. Eliot was mourning Marie Lloyd as the very type of the artist who gave back to the audience an intensified *version of themselves, the American* sensation was Al Jolson, who gave them nothing of their own. It was all his, it was sheer hard work, and he made sure they knew it.

Looking down the twentieth-century cast-list, one finds it sur*prisingly easy to pin on the famous* American stage performers a simple moral label: some attitude, if you will, to citizenship. Bing Crosby's is relaxation, conspicuous leisure. Bob Hope's, quick-wittedness (in delivery, at least), Jack Benny's, *not meanness so much as canny* thrift. Frank Sinatra's you might call independence — My-Way-ism, and so on. There is a strong implication offered in all these cases that the trait for which the performer is famous is the one which brought him his success. So not only does the success of the stars reassure the individual onlooker that anything is possible in the land of opportunity, but it invites him to consider how it was done.

It is by no means so easy to *classify their British counterparts* after the same fashion, and the reason possibly is that the time in our national history is long past when our performers felt bound to let their audiences know what good Britishers, and what sort of good *Britishers, they were.* (*At various* times in recent American history, on the other hand, it has been all too explicitly demanded that such a reassurance be given.) All this must have had a simple racial origin in America, where, in an era *of swarming immigration, the per*former's quickest route to a reaction and eventual acceptance was to declare himself: his Irish insobriety, his Jewish zeal in business, or whatever.

The exception here, the man who did not have to claim or define his place in society, because it was universally assumed, was the nominally *emancipated* black, whose love of Massa and his Southland home continued to be harped upon preposterously by the vastly popular generation of minstrel troupes, and their "Ethiopian delineators". Some black entertainers escaped sideways *into inarticulate arts*, as William Henry "Juba" Lane, the great tap-dancer, did. A few tried to humanize their stereotype, as was the case with the great comedian Bert Williams, a light-skinned West Indian who had to black up in order to find his niche *on* Broadway. When he died, he lay in state wearing the Masonic medal which was his only badge of brotherhood with whites. He had been awarded it, interestingly enough, in England.

Having escaped further sideways, later on, into jazz, black artists are now very much back in demand in their own right and complexion. But *so many things* have changed since the days of Ziegfeld (where Mr Toll's account ends), almost all of them as a result of the development of communications but comparatively few of them for the better. Pretty well everything that people want to see in America is now a show business, and stars of one branch of spectacle are constantly lured away into another, adding an extra undercurrent of competition. As I write, I have the morning paper in front of me, and I read *that* Marlon Brando, "the actor", is to appear in a film (as Superman's father) at a fee of £187,500 per day. The figure catches my eye because alongside it I have a note taken from Mr Toll's book recording that Barnum paid Jenny Lind $187,000 in 1850 for a 150-concert tour. The money promised, then as now, is part of the show, but the show may be out of control. If it should become a habit to pay stars more in order to be the more impressed by them, then the system has lost its reason, the connection between artist and audience will be severed altogether, and America may end by lulling itself into a state of security so rapturously false that we shall one day see a presidential election contested between Elvis Presley and Jimmy Connors. A Barnum and Bailey world it assuredly is, but it is possible that we ain't heard nothin' yet.

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The maximum of meaning

By Victor Erlich

YURY LOTMAN:
Analysis of the Poetic Text
Edited and translated by D. Barton Johnson
309pp. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis. $16.95.

For some fifteen years now a group of Soviet scholars based respectively in Moscow and Tartu (Estonia) have been engaged in a concerted effort to tackle problems of language, literature and culture along Structuralist-semiotic lines. The Moscow contingent, clustered around the Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies of the Academy of Sciences, includes Vyacheslav Ivanov, who has written with equal authority about structural typology of languages and S. Eisenstein's philosophy of art, and Boris Uspensky, whose *Poetics of Composition*, recently translated into English, focuses rewardingly on the point-of-view in literature and on perspective in painting. Yet by common consent Soviet neo-structuralism owes much of its vitality and cohesion to the scholarly, pedagogical and editorial activities of Yury Lotman, professor of Russian literature at the University of Tartu. *Studies in Semiotic Systems*, a series edited by Lotman, has been since 1964 the chief outlet for the more significant recent work in Soviet semiotics.

Lotman began his academic career as a fairly traditional literary historian. His studies of Pushkin and such early nineteenth-century figures as N. Karamzin and P. Vyazemsky tended towards biography and intellectual history rather than poetics. Since the early 1960s he has felt strongly drawn to problems of literary theory and increasingly determined to construe the study of literature as a coherent discipline, indeed a "science". The "unified science of literature" which he has come to espouse is closely allied to structural linguistics and information theory and indissolubly linked to semiotics. In a useful recent assessment of Lotman's theory of literature, published in a new journal of poetics, *PTL*, Ann Shukman observes:

> Culture and the understanding of it worked out by the Moscow-Tartu semiotics group is a vast communication network functioning in the given society. Literature is one of the many channels for the communication of information and information theory with its precise, quantifiable criteria of predictability and entropy is applicable to its study. Lotman's particular contribution has been to conceptualize literature as a socially functioning and historically continuing semiotic phenomenon that both creates and preserves this "information".

Art is defined here as a "secondary modelling system", the artistic text as a "special kind of organized semiotic structure".

Codification of this view of literature and of literary studies has become one of Lotman's major projects. His *Lectures on Structural Poetics* (1969), a cogent if somewhat arid tract, was followed by a more richly textured *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1970). *Analysis of the Poetic Text*, originally published in 1972 and now made available to the English-speaking reader in a careful if at times awkward translation by D. Barton Johnson, clearly was designed as a textbook. It is thus the most systematic of Lotman's three extended methodological statements.

Part I treats succinctly and, on the whole, lucidly the most important ... and concepts of poetics from "language as a material of literature" and the nature of poetry, through rhythm and metre, rhyme, parallelism, stanza and plot to another set of larger issues, e g, text and system, "bad" and "good" poetry. These general considerations are followed by textual analyses of twelve Russian lyrics which span nearly 150 years of Russian verse.

The conceptual framework of the book is heavily indebted to the Slavic Formalist-Structuralist tradition. To be sure, Lotman's view of poetic language and of the poetic process has none of the zestful lopsidedness of "pure" Formalism. He is too mindful of the "extra-textual associations" of the literary text—of genre, cultural, everyday-life and biographical contexts"—to echo the aesthetic separatism of the first Formalist manifestos. By the same token, he is too keenly attuned to the complex interplay between sound and sense in poetry to indulge in the Futurist-inspired celebration of "pure euphony" that marked Shklovsky's *The Knight's Path* (1923) and Jakobson's *Recent Russian Poetry* (1921).

Yet Russian Formalism was not a static phenomenon. If Lotman's theoretical formulations are a far cry from its early excesses, they bear considerable resemblance to such mature late-Formalist statements as the Jakobson-Tynyanov 1928 "theses" which affirmed the *interrelatedness* of literature and other cultural domains in terms we now clearly recognize as near-Structuralist. Lotman's affinity for Roman Jakobson's brand of structural poetics, including his recent studies in "grammar of poetry and poetry of grammar", is undeniable.

Similarly, his concept of the inner dynamics of the poetic text is closely akin to Tynyanov's insights into the semantic density of verse. "Semanticization" of elements which in ordinary language are non-significant is construed in *Analysis of the Poetic Text* as the salient characteristic of poetic discourse. In an earlier work Lotman argued that "all elements in poetry are sense elements". In the present book he describes poetry as a "complexly constructed meaning" and insists that "all formal elements appearing in the language may in poetry acquire a semantic character, thereby obtaining supplementary meanings". Elsewhere the point is couched in a more technical terminology: "The striving for maximal informational saturation underlies the structure of the artistic text."

Another aspect of the Tynyanov legacy which looms large here is the functional or contextual approach to literary evolution. This is the perspective that informs Lotman's handling of the distinction between poetry and prose. He properly spurns the naïve notion that prose is a more basic or "primary" mode than poetry. Actually, he argues, it is the reverse that is more nearly true: "Poetic speech was originally the only possible medium of verbal art." At its emergence artistic prose is perceived perforce "against the background of poetic culture" and seen as a departure from the poetic code that shaped the reader's literary expectations.

Lotman's case in point is the reception of Pushkin's prose, which grew out of "decades of ever-maturing poetic culture" and followed in the wake of Pushkin's own brilliant poetic achievement. Clearly, what matters most to Lotman in this connection is not the alleged chronological priority of poetry vis-à-vis artistic prose—a contingency, let me add, which a literary theorist would do well not to overgeneralize—but the larger methodological implications of the argument. Foremost among them is the recognition that the absence of a device which the reader has grown to associate with verbal art can be no less operative aesthetically than its presence, and, more broadly, that our aesthetic perception of a new work or a new body of writing is inseparable from the set of expectations which we bring to it, from the system or systems that dominate our literary culture.

As one might expect, the notion of system or code is central to Lotman's poetics. In this view a literary text is interpreted and perceived against the background of other texts and with reference to systems. But the Saussurian "language" versus "parole" dichotomy is only partly relevant here: the relationship of text and system is never an automatic realization of an abstract structure in complete form" but an "interplay" within the text of intersecting and often conflicting systems; "it is always a relationship of struggle, tension and conflict".

Lotman's partiality to the notion of conflict as a major force in the poetic process—a bias, I may add, which is not altogether alien to the Anglo-American critical tradition but which he himself prefers to label "dialectical"—is very much in evidence in his treatment of such concepts as parallelism, rhythm and rhyme. Though their ostensible common denominator is repetition or recurrence of comparable phenomena, the Lotman definitions set more store by the differences between the recurring elements than the similarities or identities of their positions. "Rhythmicity in poetry is the cyclical repetition of different elements in identical positions toward the aim of equating the unequal or revealing similarity in difference, or the repetition of the identical with the aim of revealing the false character of this identity, of establishing difference in similarity." By the same token, the effectiveness, indeed the very perceptibility, of the rhyme is made dependent here on semantic incongruity: "Rhyme resounds richly only from non-coincidence and remoteness of meanings. . . . In case of the recurrence of both sound and meaning rhyme produces an impression of poverty and can be recognized as rhyme only with difficulty."

A student of poetics, less committed to a "dialectical" view of parallelism, may find this a curiously slanted way of stating the problem. Few will, or should, quarrel with the observation that where the rhyme is a mere corollary of such extra-aesthetic factors as grammatical symmetry or lexical identity it is scarcely recognizable as such. But to insist in a textbook of poetics on the "remoteness of meanings" as a *sine qua non* of an effective rhyme betrays a characteristically modern bias or, more broadly, a tendency to give preferential treatment to poetry built upon the Poundian principle of the "unification of disparate ideas".

The above sketchy and selective summary fails to do justice to the range and cogency of Lotman's argument. His grip on Structuralist methodology is firm, his awareness of the insights and opportunities of twentieth-century poetics keen and well articulated. Above all, he combines a fine sense of the interrelationship between sound and meaning in a poem with a sophisticated grasp of its larger socio-cultural setting. And yet I find some of his formulations less than helpful and some of his emphases debatable.

First, I must own up to a degree of uneasiness about Lotman's reliance on cybernetic terminology, most notably over his inclination to locate the differentia of poetry in the "striving for maximal informational saturation". To remonstrate that Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" can scarcely be said to carry more information than does a weather report would be to register a totally misguided "lay" response. Obviously, the word "information" is used here in a special, technical sense. What is suggested is not a body of data but a higher degree of verbal organization and the concomitant qualities of unpredictability and non-redundancy, as well as, one surmises, multiplicity of meanings due to the plurality of "systems" operative in a text. I see no reason to object to these implications of the Lotmanian formula but I am not sure that much, if anything, is gained by translating the insights of modern poetics into the alien if eminently rigorous terms of information theory. "Speech organized in its entire phonic texture", or better still, "actualization" of the word in all its aspects, "semantic density" of the poetic context or "ambiguity" (in the Empsonian sense), formulas such as these have been endemic in literary theory, East and West, since the 1920s. I have yet to be persuaded that "striving for maximal informational saturation" marks a significant advance in the modern endeavour to pin down the distinctive nature of poetry.

The other difficulty which I have with Lotman's literary theorizing has to do with his tendency to over-invest in his key concepts and to press their claims a bit harder than the present state of the art or the available evidence seems to warrant. As I have already noted, he is prone to overgeneralize, to build into a definition, a pattern latent in all of poetry but especially characteristic of some literary periods or poetic styles. By the same token, his laudable eagerness to correlate the phono-grammatical and the lexical levels of poetic structure may cause him to short-circuit the intricate connection between sound and meaning. For it is one thing to recognize that no significant dimension of poetic language could be deemed irrelevant to the overall effect or meaning of the poem, in other words, to be adjudged immune to semanticization. It is quite another to insist that "*any element* on the *parole* level can be elevated to rank of meaningful elements" (italics added).

These mild apprehensions are not entirely dispelled by the twelve textual analyses which make up Part II. The texts themselves are not necessarily masterpieces or "touchstones", though all the authors represented are, in some sense, masters. (A few of the lyrics, notably Blok's "To Anna Akhmatova" or Mayakovsky's "The Scheme of Laughter" are slight efforts by major poets.) Each poem was selected frankly—and, under the circumstances, not inappropriately—to illustrate a general point, to exemplify a certain poetic "mechanism". Thus K. Batyushkov's "Thou Awakest, o Baiae, from the Tomb" was chosen for the demonstration of the "phonological-metrical level as dominant in the general structure of a text".

I must confess that, on the whole, I found Lotman's "practical criticism" somewhat disappointing. This is not to say that there is little to applaud or admire here. An erudite and wide-ranging literary historian, Lotman predictably feels as much at home in dealing with an exquisite early nineteenth-century lyric as he does in dissecting the montage technique of an ultra-modern poet. No less predictably, his analytic techniques prove apposite and rewarding when brought to bear upon Nekrasov's "Last Elegies", shaped by an alternation of two stylistic codes (conventionally poetic and colloquial ones), on F. Tyutchev's "Two Voices", built around an antithesis, or Mayakovsky's "A Scheme for Laughter" (*Skhema smekha*) whose very title enacts its central device—that of comic punning. Elsewhere careful analysis is often marred by an obtrusive effort to validate a preconception, to demonstrate a pattern.

While the centrality of the "phonological-metrical level" to the structure of Batyushkov's "Thou Awakest, o Baiae, from the Tomb" is unquestionable, I am inclined to query the interpretation of the poem's opening line that assigns definite meanings — those of "awakening" and of "tomb" respectively—to the vowels "a" and "i" and postulates a semantic opposition between the sound groups *prob* and *grob* occurring in *probuzhdaeshsya* (awakest) and *grobnitsa* (tomb). Though individual phonemes have no inherent semantic value, a phonemic opposition can be properly assigned a meaning or an import if the juxtaposed sounds or sound clusters occur throughout the poem with some consistency within contrasting lexical contexts. Yet it is scarcely legitimate to decree on the basis of a single-line configuration that "p" obtains the meaning of revival and "g" that of death, the more so since in the third line "g" occurs in *bagranala* (purple), an adjective which qualifies the life-giving *desnitsa* (dawn). This is not to say that the juxtaposition of *prob* and *grob* has no semantic resonance. But I for one would prefer to confine myself to the modest proposition that this sound parallelism highlights the words involved and thus reinforces the lexical tension between them. Conceivably, one could go further and suggest that the near-convergence of sound brings out the difference in similarity and thus provides a kind of acoustic counterpart to the image which dominates the poem, that of the "awakening" (of the partly submerged ancient city) from eternal sleep. Be that as it may, a straightforward attribution of meanings to individual vowels and consonants strikes me as unwarranted.

If, in his analysis of the Batyushkov lyric, Lotman appears to be over-eager to semanticize, in his own words, "any element on the parole level", his sturdy commitment to the concept of opposition leads him to overstress such thematic shift as occurs at midpoint in Pushkin's "When Midst the Orgies of Bustling Life". (Actually, the last two lines of the first half of the poem clearly announce the main theme of the second half and foreshadow its two closing lines.) Similarly, the dissection of the Lermontov lyric "We've Parted but Thy Portrait" is thrown off balance by the critic's excessive preoccupation with well-grounded but not all together germane generalizations. A focus on the "Romantic model of love as impossibility of contact" and on other Lermontov poems which articulate this model, appears to me to distract from, rather than to illuminate, the poem under discussion.

The treatment of F. Tyutchev's "Now I wander Along the High-road" (*Vot bredu ya vdol bolshoy dorogi*) is equally centrifugal. The parallel with the famous Lermontov poem, "I Go Out Alone onto the Road", (*Vykhozhu odin ya no dorogu*) which shares with the Tyutchev lyric the key word of the opening line and the metrical pattern but little else, is less than compelling. It is further vitiated by Lotman's characteristic insistence on reading into the Lermontov text an opposition between the "dynamic motif of the road and the static motif of life". (In contradistinction to Tyutchev's persona, Lermontov's "I" does not wander or trudge along the road but goes "out onto it" to contemplate, awe-struck, the grandeur and the stillness of the starry night.)

It is only fair to add that these exercises in the structural analysis of literature do not take the full measure of Lotman's interpretive skills. In his provocative treatment of artistic space in Gogol (1968), and in his more recent discussion of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1975), he proved not only a resourceful theorist but also an acute and perceptive textual critic.

Are the weaknesses of the applied section of *Analysis* a reflection on the principles which Lotman expounds so confidently in Part I, or are they rather testimony to the risks of using individual poems in order to illustrate general propositions? The latter procedure is as precarious as it is legitimate. Interpretation of poetry cannot dispense with poetics—with sharply defined concepts and categories. Furthermore, criticism *qua* discursive mode can never do justice, try as it may, to the uniqueness, the unrepeatability of the individual poem. To analyse, to explicate, to interpret, means always in some degree to label, to juxtapose, to relate—to draw parallels with comparable entities or invoke larger ones, be they the poet's oeuvre, an appropriate thematics cluster of metrical pattern, a literary style or genre, a cultural model, in a word, to place the poem within a context that is apt to illuminate it. All I am suggesting is that the critic's choice of the relevant context be dictated less by his overall methodological commitment than by the distinctive tenor and texture of the work under discussion.

Whatever the pitfalls and the limitations of the Lotmanian enterprise, it represents the most sophisticated and intellectually coherent development in present-day Soviet literary scholarship as well as one of the most rigorous manifestations of the current Structuralist trend in literary studies. Moreover, it has substance and integrity. Lotman's prose can be overly abstruse and cumbersome, but it is never wilfully opaque or elaborately pretentious. And this, at our present juncture, is something to be grateful for.

How it is made

By Peter France

L. M. O'TOOLE and A. SHUKMAN (Editors):
Russian Poetics in Translation
Volume 1: Generating the Literary Text, 77pp.
Volume 2: Poetry and Prose, 84pp.
Oxford: Holdan Books. £2.50 per volume.

In Stalin's Russia formalism became a dirty word, but the formal method of studying literature survived and is now once again officially accepted in the Soviet Union, albeit under the name of structuralism or semiotics. Here now is a chance for non-Russian speakers to see what sort of work is being done by Soviet scholars such as Yury Lotman. The two volumes reviewed here are the first in an enterprising series distributed by Holdan Books, 15 North Parade Avenue, Oxford. Future issues will include general essays by Lotman, Bogatyrev and others, recent work on metrics, and previously untranslated key articles by the Formalists. The articles are all translated as clearly and straightforwardly as the original allows.

With frequent references to such predecessors as Shklovsky, Eikhenbaum and Tynyanov, and equally to Eisenstein's theoretical work on the cinema, the contributors to these two volumes all start from the fundamental question, "How is it made?" The first, programmatic piece on "generating the literary text" (by Scheglov and Zholkovskii) argues that underlying every text there is a "theme" and that it is possible to show the "expressive devices" which permit the constitution of the complete text. As Scheglov says at the beginning of another article, "the main object of research is seen in this light as being to discover the theme itself and the process by which it is turned into a text in a given work". The danger of course is that of crudely boiling down any work to its "theme", and the authors insist that the task of criticism is not to provide a digest, but to show the productive process; they stress also that themes may be complex or contradictory and that their approach does not deny the obvious fact of multiple meaning. Be that as it may, the dominant concern of the analyses which follow is one familiar enough in Western criticism, that of showing how the basic meaning of a text (e g, Ivanov on a Khlebnikov poem) or the constant themes of a corpus of texts (e g, Scheglov on the Sherlock Holmes stories) are embodied in different elements of the text's structure. In both these examples the theme turns out to contain divergent or even conflicting elements (e g, security and adventure in Conan Doyle), but the stress is on the way these are brought together as economically as possible rather than on the contradiction itself (as in the work of P. Macherey).

Except in the Sherlock Holmes piece, which explicitly refers to Vladimir Propp, there is less concern with linear construction than with the "figure in the carpet". Only two [redacted] degree of diagrammatic formalization; one of these, "The Logic of Metaphor" by Y. Levin, although not unconnected with the other contributions (metaphor being an "expressive device"), might be said to belong to semantics rather than poetics.

The Formalists were often provocatively indifferent to the social causes or repercussions of works of literature. By contrast, several of these articles relate structural analysis to historical context. In the Sherlock Holmes piece this is done only very perfunctorily, but Yury Lotman's articles on Pushkin's "Angelo" (a reworking of *Measure for Measure*) is largely concerned with the relevance of the poem to the early years of the reign of Nicholas II. Because it says very little about the actual words of the poem, Lotman's piece is easy to read for those who know no Russian, but it does not seem to me as illuminating as some of the analyses of short poems in his student manual *Analiz Poeticheskogo Teksta*. In fact, one could say of most of these studies that they are interesting without providing any new challenge to the reader who knows something about, say, French or American criticism of the past twenty years. Perhaps this is reassuring—in any case, the series is to be welcomed as another move to break down barriers between East and West.

But Not Forever

City of elevators without a thirteenth floor,
All news radio, panic in the bathroom,
Poems scribbled on the backs of bookstore receipts,
I'd fly down a flight of frozen stairs but where
When my comparisons collapse, can I go?
I've been five minutes late since the day I was born
And swallowed the urge to scream but sweetly
And at whom? Who deserves this fatal breath of anger
Made tender, this blindfolded choice between
The two clenched fists of a carnival barker
Containing nothing and a subway token, respectively?

All love's secrets are dirty, hooray! but
Guess what's stretching my eyelids? Oh blessed irrelevance
Of lilies without a vase! The difference
Between oak and elm is growing
As the future of blue turns the evening green
And the heart, less bird than helicopter, escapes
The empty cage, with its door swung open to the sky.

David Lehman

Subterranean schemes

By Lubomir Doležel

ALAN DUNDES:
Analytic Essays in Folklore
265pp. The Hague: Mouton. Paperback, Fl 48.

OJO AREWA and G. M. SHREVE:
The Genesis of Structures in African Narrative
Volume 1: Zande Trickster Tales
280pp. New York: Conch Magazine. $20.

Alan Dundes has expanded substantially the scope of American folklore studies and enriched their methodology. The essays in this collection were originally published between 1961 and 1971, that is on either side of his influential monograph on the "morphology" of North American Indian folktales (1964). This monograph, inspired directly by the work of Vladimir Propp, established Professor Dundes as the main representative of structuralism in American folklore studies. However, the collection in *Analytic Essays in Folklore* makes it quite clear that simultaneously with developing his structural approach, Professor Dundes was also interested in applying psychoanalytic concepts to the study of folklore.

At first sight, these two approaches make rather strange bedfellows. As Professor Dundes himself has emphasized, the structural approach emerged as a negation of the traditional historical approach: instead of studying isolated phenomena in their evolution, it focused on the relationships between the parts and the whole; instead of concentrating on genetic explanations, it emphasized the functional aspect. As a psychoanalyst, Professor Dundes seems to be fascinated with those very questions which the structural approach had pushed into the background: the interpretation of isolated motifs (the earth-diver, the summoning of the deity through fasting, father-son conflict, the "hook arm", and so on) and the problem of genesis, which returns in the form of speculation about "psychological origin".

On closer inspection, certain fundamental features turn out to be common both to Professor Dundes's structuralism and his psychoanalysis. To start with, he holds that the meaning of a text is always hidden beneath the "surface" in an "underlying" ("deep") structure. In fact, the "surface" meaning seems to be either irrelevant, or misleading. A folkloristic text is a sort of riddle which can be resolved only by suggesting an interpretation in terms of an underlying scheme. From this general point of view, it makes no difference whether the terms of the scheme are borrowed from the language of structuralism or that of psychoanalysis.

A necessary consequence of Professor Dundes's procedure is the uniformity of his interpretations. The structural (Proppian) scheme is assigned not only to folktales, but also to games, and the specific structural features of games are necessarily left out. The psychoanalytic (oedipal) scheme is assigned to the plot of Jack and the Beanstalk, the Grail legend, and the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. This last case is especially instructive: the interpretation not only denies the "surface" meaning of the story ("a child should always tell the truth"), but also skips easily over the double meaning of cherry ("tree" and "fruit").

This uniformity of interpretation resembles, in fact, the results of the old "projection" method, which Professor Dundes criticizes. To be sure, in the new "projection", it is not the "celestial" or the "vegetative rebirth" story, but rather the Proppian plot or "family romance", which is told again and again. In either case, the cultural and historical variety of folklore narratives is reduced to a static core, which is always there because the interpreter has decided to find it there.

Nowhere in this collection does Professor Dundes discuss the relationship between the structural and psychoanalytic approaches, they are simply offered as alternative hypotheses applied to two different sets of phenomena. Such a theoretical split is even more obvious in *The Genesis of Structures in African Narrative* by O. Arewa and G. M. Shreve. In the first four chapters, we are offered a generative approach to folklore; the fourth chapter, which is supposed to provide a "covering theory", is a blend of phenomenology and semiotic "pragmatics". The relationship between these two systems is not at all obvious, but the authors do not bother to tell us what it is.

The theoretical laxity of this book is only one manifestation of a more general problem: poor editing. There are many instances of stylistic sloppiness and odd terminology ("the relatively natural world", "the context of situation", "viewing and acting-in the world"). Symbols and operations are introduced which are never properly explained. Many pages are filled with a redundant reproduction of Propp's list of functions and Evans-Pritchard's collection of Zande trickster tales. In the Introduction, a "specific analysis of one tale from the set" is promised for the second half of Section III; one looks in vain for such an analysis; instead a schematic "derivational diagram" (completely unintelligible) of tale No 7 is inserted at the end of Section IV.

Unlike Professor Dundes, the authors of this book postulate a connection between the universal "deep" structure and culturally determined "surface" structures; this postulate, however, is not satisfactorily developed. Moreover, on the level of "deep" structure, a schematic uniformity appears again. It is as if folklorists can accept the idea of a universal "deep" structure only in the form of a prefabricated scheme which is repeatedly applied to new texts and materials. In the case of the trickster tales, the Proppian scheme is doubly inappropriate in that these seem to be structurally heterogeneous. As the recent work of Denise Paulme and Claude Bremond has demonstrated, there are many forms and "functions" of deception embedded in stories with different structures. On the other hand, why include tales in which no deception is to be found? One suspects that this "interpretation" is based on the fact that the cycle is unified by the name of the protagonist: a solution absolutely contrary to the spirit of Propp's theory.

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The organization of intensity

By Virginia Spate

CHRISTOPHER GREEN :
Léger and the Avant-Garde
350pp. Yale University Press. £15.

Until recently, the history of modern art was presented as a self-contained, self-generating, practically self-explanatory sequence of styles. Christopher Green makes an important contribution in *Léger and the Avant-Garde* to the current tendency to examine the content of such art, preserving what was valuable in the formal approach by basing his interpretation on a rigorous analysis of specific paintings (I must here praise the editor who has produced a handsome book and who has had the sense to realize—as few editors of "scholarly" art-history do—the necessity of placing reproductions where they are discussed in the text). Green's premise is that Léger's art was dependent on "his changing view of modern life" and that both were determined by "his changing avant-garde surroundings", so he examines the changes in Léger's art between 1909 and 1925 in these terms. In so doing, he shows that Léger was extremely intelligent and deeply responsive to the intellectual movements of his time and he redresses the common image of Léger as a rather simple man. Green's attempt to relate pictorial change to intellectual change is admirable, but some of his assumptions and methods are open to question, and—since they are often shared by other historians of this kind—they raise questions of more general significance.

Many such historians assume that a painting is created by a series of intellectual decisions and that it can thus be interpreted by direct reference to contemporary ideas. Green consistently presents developments in Léger's painting in terms of conscious strategy and in language which is curiously abstract; he avoids using simple, active verbs to describe Léger's activity, and almost nowhere can one find the crucial, "Léger painted . . .". Art-historians generally pay too little attention to the nature of the act of painting, to the fact that the painter—while painting—thinks pictorially rather than verbally. It would, of course, be absurd to say that the painter is uninfluenced by verbally expressed ideas or that he does not have conscious ideological intentions. However, in the act of creating, these modes of consciousness are subordinated to the form-making consciousness in such a way that the ultimate meaning of the painting is not identical with any verbally defined motive (this was recognized by Léger, who wrote "the creator . . . is caught between his consciousness and his unconsciousness . . . the subjective and the objective interpenetrate in such a way that the creative event remains always a partial enigma for the artist"). The painter, we assume, expresses himself by means of a specific pictorial structure, but one should note that such structures are often inherent in works which predate the artist's conscious commitment to the ideology used to interpret his mature work.

Léger's Le Siphon, *1924, and (below) an advertisement in* Le Matin *in November of that year: from* Léger and the Avant-Garde.

This is true of Léger. Green devotes almost two chapters to his "Contrastes de formes" of 1913, tracing their origins and analysing their content by reference to avant-garde theory and practice. In 1913, Léger declared that the "simultaneous contrast" of lines, forms and colours was the true way of representing modern life; he claimed that this principle was based on observation and found further confirmation in the fact that many contemporaries employed contrasts of forms and images. However, his few surviving naturalistic works—painted before contact with the avant-garde—contain embryonic contrasts (even in an impressionistic work of 1905, he hardened soft natural forms into contrasting shapes). His discovery of contrasts as an essential mode of expression was not simply the discovery of a way to express an avant-garde image of modern life, but a means to himself. Similarly the fluid, fluctuating forms of Delaunay's 1913 paintings of "the essence of modern life" were foreshadowed by his impressionist works. From very early on, each painter had an individual brush-stroke which meant that each would produce a significantly different structure. The difference cannot be explained purely ideologically or simply in terms of their previous experience of works by other painters. However, even if such differences cannot yet be explained, they should be kept in mind for they help one to be realistic about the kind of meaning which can be embodied in paint.

One of Green's central themes is that of the antithesis between "realism" and "idealism" or "realism" and the "purely pictorial". Leaving aside the fact that the tension between the abstractness of paint and our experience of the physical world is central to all realist painting, a closer examination of the artist's experience shows the artificiality of such abstract antitheses. As Green points out, in 1919, Léger was painting works whose subject is almost illegible, while asserting "I rarely get away from the subject now". This suggests that the act of painting was a means of experiencing the reality of the subject. Green does not examine this act—he tends to leap from a minutely detailed analysis of the genesis and form of the painting, to rather abstract conclusions which, I often find, correspond neither to the artist's nor to the spectator's experience. Thus he says of "La Noce":

> the past of a man and a woman is caught up and pushed forward into the future: the movement of a temporal, a psychological and a physical dynamism combines to create a concentrated image of interpenetration and *la durée*.

Green later draws a suggestive parallel between the spontaneous, "open-ended" development of the "Contrastes de formes" and Bergson's philosophy of "perpetual becoming". The origins of Léger's approach lay in the works of those artists who developed their paintings directly on the canvas (the Impressionists; Cézanne; the Cubists, Braque and Picasso). In "La Noce", Léger probably began with a summary linear indication of the jumbled forms of the wedding-party, and then developed his painting on the canvas in terms of the suggestions made by form, simultaneously strengthening its physicality and responding to the images it evoked in his mind. His relationship to the subject was maintained in the act of painting, even as the work departed farther from appearance and became more and more itself. It was thus not illustrative of Bergson's ideas on *la durée* or Romains's Unanimist ideas on group emotion, and the most that one could argue is that it embodied experience analogous to those they sought to express in words. Their ideas may have affected Léger's consciousness, but at a more profound level than Green suggests—Léger himself described how the mind "ordered, absorbed and used" the "raw materials" of experience in a balance between the subjective and the objective. His development was thus more unified than this book implies: he did not change his style and his view of reality as often and as completely as Green asserts. There are—as Green brilliantly demonstrates—major differences between paintings of say 1917 and 1922, but they are modifications, rather than transformations of a remarkably consistent attitude towards painting and life.

Much recent art-history has been devoted to a very detailed formal analysis of the work of art. This is, I believe, a necessary approach, but it can destroy one's sense of the physical reality of the work through sheer accumulation of detail. We should heed Léger's words, "a human pride . . . wants to understand everything through logic or deduction. However, we must call a halt in the presence of the work of art—and remember that our sensory 'instincts' come into play there" (1933). Too few historians step back to consider the spectator's relationship to the work—indeed, in this book one could almost say that there are no spectators. This is particularly serious for Green's interpretation of the works of the 1920s. His account of "the call to order" is an admirably lucid presentation of fascinating and complex material, but it is flawed by the absence of any examination of its social context and meaning. Green's focus on the avant-garde may explain why he presents the impetus towards a rational collective style, responsive to modern technology and associated with the creation of an ideal environment, almost exclusively as an aesthetic phenomenon. However, the ideal was a social one; it was inspired by the trauma of the war and it led inevitably to a questioning of the political order. Léger's attitude to these issues is not discussed in any depth; he is presented merely as "a modern realist with popular aspirations", but the author never makes it clear what he means by "popular". Yet Léger's writings of the first half of the 1920s show how deeply he believed in the social function of the new art and how clearly he conceived a mutually creative relationship between artist and worker: the latter was subject to "the economic war", yet, even in the midst of his feverish struggle to survive, he was "impelled by . . . the need for Beauty" which he could himself satisfy by using the tools and materials of the machine age to create "marvellous objects" such as shop displays or street spectacles.

Léger was led to question the need for the "fine" artist, but suggested that a few enlightened ones would be able to integrate "the immense, uncoordinated vitality unleashed by the creative artisans" and so to create "a state of organized intensity", pictorial, architectural and urban. Thus, together, artist and artisan could develop "a society without frenzy, calm and ordered, knowing how to live naturally within the Beautiful", a beauty which contained all the vitality of modern life.

Green's discussion of situations or paintings which raise the issue of the relationship between art and society tend to break off at that point. Thus, we are told about Léger's contact with recent Russian art, but the Revolution on which that art depended is not so much as mentioned—it would have been worth asking if Léger had heard about the revolutionary debates on the function of art in the new society (Léger offers a tantalizing fragment about having met Trotsky during his wartime leave and often talking "about the thrilling problem of a coloured city"). Green's discussion of Léger's use of "popular" materials (film, advertising, mass-produced objects, etc) is fascinating, but he does not make it clear why Léger should have used them—he occasionally seems to imply that Léger was concerned with a popular audience, but he does not really look beyond the self-referring world of the avant-garde. It would have helped if he had examined the concept of the avant-garde instead of presenting it as a self-evident entity for it is, of course, a historical phenomenon, the product of capitalist society, and the assumptions which it embodies create almost insurmountable difficulties for the artist with radical social commitments.

When Léger came back from the war he said: "I want to make life"; this was not simply a statement in an aesthetic debate; he wanted to create life, to embody his delight in the vitality and promise of the postwar world and to awaken others to that delight in the lives of those he had come to respect during the war. The irony lies in the fact that while the avant-garde helped Léger develop his means of making life, it also restricted that life to the world of galleries and museums. It was his growing awareness of this that led Léger to assert in the late 1930s that the reason for the public incomprehension of the new art was social rather than pictorial: "the fault lies in the social order . . . it is not due to any lack of human quality on the part of the works." *Léger and the Avant-Garde* is in many ways a brilliant book, but its presentation of Léger's painting purely in terms of the "avant-garde" ultimately diminishes it.

Homage to Ledoux

Anita Brookner

HOWARD C. RICE, Jr :
Thomas Jefferson's Paris
[illegible] Princeton University Press. [illegible]

On due reflection, I would rather pay my taxes in one of the supremely elegant buildings erected in Paris in the 1780s by Ledoux for that purpose than have them painlessly siphoned off at source. There is something about a tangible example of government expenditure that concentrates the mind wonderfully and permits a sharper assessment of the city's amenities to the innocent stroller. No stroller about Paris was more innocent than Thomas Jefferson, who was American minister there from 1785-89, and no chronicler as uncorrupted by twentieth-century jargon as Howard Rice, who has devoted his life to Jefferson's papers and perhaps attaches too much importance to the latter's every step. He has compiled an account of Paris as Jefferson probably knew it and expects us to follow him in his peregrinations.

The excessive moderation of Jefferson's response to the city, the astounding and beautiful Paris of the 1780s, is curiously matched by Mr Rice's account ("the names of David, Vigée-Lebrun, Hubert Robert and Houdon are still well-known"). Jefferson's Paris consisted of *les beaux quartiers*—the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and St Germain, the remoter and more rural part of the Champs Elysées (where the Arc de Triomphe now stands), Passy and Auteuil, where gardens covered the steep slopes running down to the river, the terrace of St Germain-en-Laye, Chaville, and the Désert de Retz. He was thus untroubled by those matters of urban poverty which were grouped outside his range, in the Faubourg St Antoine and St Marcel, and was able to greet the Revolution with pleasant anticipation. Was he perhaps a little patronizing? Should the author of the Declaration of Independence have remarked of the opening of the States General on May 5, 1789, "viewing it as an Opera, it was imposing"? Even the excitable Arthur Young, choosing a propitious moment to survey French husbandry, [illegible] the virulence of the crowd [illegible] were not experienced [illegible] winter of 1788-89 [illegible] impressions proved more reliable than those of Jefferson who sailed home in September 1789, with considerable quantities of French furniture, porcelain, carpets, wine, plants, harpsichords and busts by Houdon, before the going got rough, but not before Ledoux's exquisite toll-houses had been fired and sacked by incendiaries.

And how he took it all for granted! New Paris consisted of the Hôtel de Salm and St Philippe du Roule and the Théâtre Français (Odéon) with its little semi-circular place and radiating streets named after France's greatest dramatists; it consisted of the surprising École de Chirurgie and the noble Monnaie, and the ingenious Couvent des Capucins (Lycée Condorcet), and the misleadingly simple villas and townhouses by Ledoux. New Paris was, above all, Victor Louis's magnificent arcades in the Palais Royal gardens. Fortunately, most of these buildings still stand, although their yellow-white stone has softened with time [illegible] tower and Charles de Gaulle-Roissy and that wretched extravaganza going up in the Halles. This handsome and ingenious book, clearly a labour of love, almost inclines one to the revisionist thought that Talleyrand was right, in one respect at least, about *la douceur de vivre*.

It also reminds one of the beauty of eighteenth-century Parisian domestic architecture, overshadowed in art-historical annals by that of the seventeenth century. There are no up-to-date biographies of Chalgrin, Bélanger or even Ledoux, no biographies at all of Victor Louis, Brongniart, Antoine or Gondouin. Nor is there much evidence that these marvellous men are attracting much attention. Perhaps Mr Rice's illustrations or even one of his conducted tours could go some way to changing this dismal state of affairs.

After the Party was over

By Patrick McCarthy

CLAUDE ROY :
Somme toute
462pp. Paris: Gallimard. 54fr.

JEAN DUVIGNAUD :
Le ça perché
284pp. Paris: Stock. 40fr.

The third volume of Claude Roy's memoirs *Somme toute* begins in the mid-1950s, when M Roy was thoroughly disillusioned with the Communist Party. Jean Duvignaud's autobiography, *Le ça perché*, deals with the same themes: what brought the post-war French intellectual to communism and what did he do when he left it? M Duvignaud answers the first question: "It is absolutely certain that scientific, political, economic and psychological reasons played no part in this conversion." To become a communist was to participate in a "revolutionary action that offers to mankind that possession of the absolute which men have sought in religion". As M Roy puts it: "The Communist adventure seemed to provide a complete answer to the uncertainty of the self." The militant achieves immortality as part of the dynamic movement of history, while the fraternity he feels for his comrades replaces union with God. David Caute has advised us to distrust such explanations and certainly these two books should be read with the same reserves as Edgar Morin's *Autocritique*. There were logical reasons to join the PC at the Liberation. Communism seemed to ex-Resistants like Roy and Duvignaud a way to continue their struggle; after the defeat of the Nazis the next step was to build socialism. Yet the two explanations are not mutually exclusive. To a generation that had known only the Depression, fascism and wars, politics replaced faith. There was indeed a heaven, but it had to be built here on earth.

M Duvignaud soon realized his mistake. He was searching for Trotsky's permanent revolution and discovered a Stalinist bureaucracy. The kind of fraternity he envisaged was a loose-knit group which could act and change itself. He could not tolerate the authoritarianism in the PC and, at the time of the Stalin-Tito split, he sided with the dissident Tito and left. He explored and rejected the need for the absolute in *Les idoles sacrifiées* (1951), where he depicts a revolutionary group undermined by its inability to admit that its leader is corrupt. M Roy's case is more complex because he remained in the party after Duvignaud, Morin and Marguerite Duras had all left. At some level he knew all about Stalin's crimes, but knowledge could not overcome belief. Again and again M Roy describes his communist experience in religious terms: "I had lived for years . . . in the great womb of a Church clinging to a faith." Obsessed with death, he turned also to Eastern philosophy in pursuit of oneness. In some ways he is not interested in politics at all: issues like the Common Market mean nothing to him; they do not exist on the same plane as the revolution, which is depicted in *Somme toute* as a state of grace.

M Roy's view of authority is more ambivalent than M Duvignaud's. He came to the party directly from another dogmatic creed, the Action Française and, at the very moment of joining in 1943, he published *Suite française*, where the traces of Maurras are clear. His memoirs contain a string of father-figures—Maurras, Stalin, whom M Roy once called the "Prince of the Great North", Thorez and Aragon. He explains: "There *has to be* a Father so that one feels guided, directed, supported . . . he *has to be* infallible so that the believer will not weaken." Yet M Roy has a rebellious strain: he had admired in Maurras the foe of the Third Republic and he glorified the communist *maquisard*. In 1956 the heretic won out. Along with Roger Vailland, he criticized the Soviet invasion of Hungary and was expelled. Even then he was torn. If the party is infallible, any fault must lie with the individual. The communist leadership fosters guilt in its intellectuals, who have perpetually to atone for not being car-workers at Billancourt. M Roy even affirms that the reason Aragon remains in the PC is his sense of guilt: the party is his cross. In M Roy's case childhood sessions in the confessional-box had clearly left their mark.

What did the loss of so many intellectuals mean to the party? In retrospect it may have been a blessing. The official who organized M Roy's expulsion was none other than George Marchais, and the reason he gave was that M Roy was disloyal to the Soviet Union. In recent years this same Marchais has led the party away from Moscow and along a French road to socialism. But the paradox is only superficial. The French road, which runs via elections and an alliance with François Mitterrand, means voiding communism of its revolutionary content. But Roy and Duvignaud—like Sartre—were really attacking the party from its left. M Roy's interpretation of the Polish and Hungarian uprisings was that the workers wanted to form soviets; they were the real communists and they were put down by the reactionary Red Army. The last thing Waldeck Rochet and Marchais needed, when they took their reformist line around 1964, was a group of dissident illuminists dreaming of soviets. A more profound change was taking place in any case. M Duvignaud reflects that the great event of the late 1950s was not de Gaulle's return to power but the belated arrival in France of mass industrialization. Growing prosperity put a final end to hopes of revolution and politics became a matter of economics rather than faith. In this sober, complex age Sartre's influence declined, while the *nouveau roman* and structuralism came to the fore. And this leads to the second question: what does the ex-communist of the 1950s do in the France of the 1960s and 1970s?

Somme toute provides no real answer. M Roy returns to a theme he treated in *Léonie et les siens* (1963). He rediscovers fraternity as part of a small group of heretics, refugees from bolshevism who are bound together by persecution: Lukács, Lengyel, Kolakowski. But in fact M Roy has found a better defence in his varied writing talents. He has published poems, essays, travel pieces in the tradition of Valery Larbaud—a few years ago he won the Larbaud prize—as well as books on Baroque art and Romantic poetry. It is a dazzling achievement and it has brought repeated accusations of facility. M Roy has been called a butterfly, an eternal Fabrice del Dongo wondering whether he really fought at the battle of Waterloo. *Somme toute* offers the explanation that M Roy, ex-Catholic, ex-Action Française, ex-communist, still feels the lack of an absolute. Politically he is vague. He firmly rejects new father-figures like Mao. Both he and Duvignaud have scant use for the New Left, which seems to them to repeat their own mistakes. In a recent article M Roy rebuked Sartre for dabbling in doctrines like Cuban socialism or Baader-Meinhof terrorism. He has a point, but the opposite rebuke could be directed at *Somme toute*. Sartre knows that an ideal of liberation must be spelt out and acted on; M Roy talks about the workers "owning their own lives" but he does not explain what this means. He has not redefined the 1940s ideal of commitment in a way that makes sense today.

M Duvignaud, a lesser writer but a better thinker, has pondered this. The key to his work as a sociologist is still the examination of how a particular group can transform itself. Reacting against the centralized structure of the PC, he looks for the "creative nucleus" of a community: its ability to learn and change. *Le ça perché* contains a commentary on his best-known book *Chebika*, the study of a Tunisian village. Heretical as ever, M Duvignaud there criticized Bourguiba's brand of socialism, which attempts to impose change from above. As a result the Neo-destour government refused to allow the film of *Chebika* to be made in Tunisia. M Duvignaud shows that the supposedly backward villagers were able to undertake real change by drawing on elements in their culture. Other elements had to be discarded, but the villagers were able to achieve this after discussion and analysis. M Duvignaud concludes: "human communities . . . create themselves, so to speak, in a continuing process of invention". An active role is offered to the sociologist who, instead of simply observing, participates in change by helping the community to learn about itself. M Duvignaud had found a new kind of commitment.

But Chebika is not France, so in *Le ça perché* he must rethink what he has learnt. He is critical of contemporary French culture, which he considers abstract, esoteric and conservative. He feels that the obsession with language reduces feelings and objects to mere words and that the *nouveau roman* lacks raw experience—"talking about literature is replacing creation". His favourite target is structuralism which, by insisting on the eternal traits of a culture denies the presence of change. The structuralists, claim M Duvignaud, are the unwitting allies of Giscard d'Estaing's technocrats. His own aim is to rediscover in France genuine groups with creative potential of their own. He has begun an enormous study of young people, interviewing them and allowing them to speak for themselves.

Le ça perché ends on a hopeful note and yet one is not quite convinced. When the first volume of his study, *La Planète des jeunes*, appeared last year, M Duvignaud seemed disappointed. Contemporary youth was troubled, but the effects of May 1968 had worn themselves out and he could find no coherent pattern of change. Neither he nor M Roy is pleased with what has happened in post-war France, but their books are a great help in understanding it.

Creature comforts

By John Sturrock

FREDERIC VITOUX :
Bébert
Le chat de Louis-Ferdinand Céline
173pp. Paris: Grasset. 28fr.

JEAN-PIERRE DAUPHIN and HENRI GODARD (Editors) :
Cahiers Céline
Volume 1 : Céline et l'actualité littéraire, 1932-1957. 185pp. 30fr.
Volume 2 : Céline et l'actualité littéraire, 1957-1961. 245pp. 40fr.
Paris : Gallimard.

Frédéric Vitoux was already the author of one original and constructive book on Céline, called *Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Misère et parole* (reviewed in the *TLS* on July 13, 1973); he has now written a second. Bébert, mercifully, is not its true subject, Céline is; the cat, in M Vitoux's words, offers "un bon détour pour mieux comprendre son maître". Bébert appears only in the books which Céline published after the war, and most strikingly in the trilogy—*Nord, D'un château l'autre, Rigodon*—tracing his eventful and circuitous path through the shambles of Germany in 1944-45. Céline travelled with his wife, with the film actor Robert Le Vigan, and with Bébert, who had once belonged to Le Vigan; in the three books the cat looms very nearly as large as the humans. As a literary presence Bébert is something more than a pet.

How much more M Vitoux makes intelligently clear. He starts, none too promisingly, with a short biography of Bébert, from his purchase at the cat counter in La Samaritaine in 1935 to his death from cancer early in 1952; all this proves is that one cat's life is much like another's. But then M Vitoux gets down to work more seriously, on the representation of Bébert instead of the animal himself. He argues, most convincingly, that Bébert is given an important and consistent role to play in the trilogy, as a guarantee of Céline's authenticity. The cat appears and disappears according to whether Céline is in or out of touch with reality: he is a presence "qui retient Céline au monde", and if he is there on the page we can be sure that the hallucinations are, for a time, in abeyance.

M Vitoux finds other virtues in Bébert too, beyond structural ones, as a kind of ideal self for Céline and also, generically, as an animal. Like so many misanthropes, Céline found the lovable qualities he missed in people in animals, and Bébert for him was a superior creature because he lived, literally, on the right wavelength, picking up those mysterious, silent *ondes* which Céline thought so much more significant than the arrant hypocrisies of human reason. M Vitoux brings all this out tidily and succinctly, and if he now and again goes too far—his attempt to make Bébert represent "the good Jew" is most implausible, and lacks support from Céline's own texts—that is a welcome fault: Céline is far from being the haphazard, transparent writer he was long assumed to be, and it is encouraging to have criticism which refuses to take him at face value.

The first two *Cahiers Céline* reprint for the most part the interviews which Céline gave, to newspaper, radio and television journalists, between the publication of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* in 1932 and his death in 1961. These are essentially literary interviews; his more political interventions will reappear in a later *Cahier*.

The chief interest of the first *Cahier* is the repeated descriptions of the milieu Céline was working in when he published the *Voyage*: the various journalists who ran him to earth—and was it really as difficult as they made out? For a reputedly anti-social man Céline gave a suspiciously large number of interviews—knew at once that his seedy consulting-room in Clichy-la-Garenne made excellent copy, and the numerous interviews of 1932-33 indicate a dimension of Céline which calls for more attention than it has so far had, as the medical man. But, all in all, *Cahier I* is rather meagre; the interviewers are easily satisfied and generally irresolute in pressing the kind of questions which might have made greater sense of Céline at this stage of his life.

Cahier 2 is more substantial. It starts with the publication of *D'un château l'autre* in 1957, and the notorious, very interesting interview he gave to *L'Express*. The hostility to him was far from dead at that time, and how Céline thrives on it. He complains endlessly and colourfully about his poverty and the need to keep on writing to the bitter end in order to pay off his (unexplained) debts to his publisher. He threatens France, which has grown flabby and materialistic, with the worse fate he can imagine: the elimination of the white race by the yellow. He gives a bleak picture of his childhood in the Passage de Choiseul, eating nothing but noodles amidst a family he accuses of "L'acceptation frénétique", or a terrible servility towards the better-off. The longer interviews in this volume are far more ambitious and productive than those in the earlier volume.

Céline has much to say about his style, and his unconcern with the content of his books (a defence, this, against criticism of the pernicious opinions he put forward in his pamphlets). He will not admit that he was ever antisemitic, only that he believed that the Jews would lead Europe into an unnecessary war against Hitler, and that he was right.

Céline was a rollicking, uninhibited talker, and individually many of these interviews make lively reading. Collectively, they are rather monotonous and this is no book to read through at a sitting. But as the once infamous Céline starts to vanish feet first into the academic pulp-mill, dare one ask, yet again, when some publisher in France will be man enough to reprint, instead of these largely dispensable interviews, the scandalous, well-nigh unobtainable pamphlets of the pre-war and war years?

Gravity and grace

By Peter Hebblethwaite

SIMONE WEIL :
The Notebooks
Volume 1: 331pp.
Volume 2: 315pp.
Translated by Arthur Wills
£6.50 each.
Intimations of Christianity among the Ancient Greeks
Translated and edited by Elizabeth Chase Geissbuhler
208pp. £4.
Routledge and Kegan Paul.

The latest reprint of the works of Simone Weil has a chaste austerity that would have pleased her. The orange dust-jacket is unadorned, the cover black within. There are no explanatory blurbs or introductions, and no dates to provide sign-posts. The uninitiated reader might be forgiven for thinking that the three volumes had floated down from some remote Olympus and enjoyed extra-terrestrial and extra-temporal status. Yet we know that the period covered by the *Notebooks* extends from the collapse of France in 1940 until her death in exile in 1943. She was reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* while the German armies were overrunning France. This apparent detachment does not indicate the self-absorption of the intellectual. The relevance of Simone Weil was always an in-depth relevance. Thus while Europe was collapsing about her, she was reading the *Iliad* and interpreting it as Europe's greatest epic poem which teaches us never to admire naked power, never to hate the enemy, and never to despise suffering.

The *Notebooks* or *Cahiers* are not a private spiritual journal. Simone and her anxieties are perceived only indirectly, though they are omnipresent. The *Notebooks* are the work-record of an omnivorous reader and a thinker who moved with excruciating slowness. She adopted an idea only when all alternative avenues had been finally closed. The appropriate comparison is with that other unfinished work, the *Pensées* of Pascal, and in their own way the *Notebooks* form an apologia for Christianity which is all the more effective for being incomplete, and above all being written from the threshold, the *seuil*, than from the comfortable hinterland of faith. Like Pascal she traces the catastrophic effects of the Fall which she places under the heading of "gravity": this is seen both as a metaphor and as a physical reality.

On almost every page an image or a memorable idea flashes forth. "Of two men who have no experience of God", she writes, "he who denies him is perhaps nearer to him than the other." The *Deus Absconditus* theme is pushed to the limits of orthodoxy: "God has only been able to create by hiding himself." One wishes that the translators had not added to the obscurities of creation: *Misère de l'homme sans Dieu*—another Pascalian theme—becomes clumsily "Misery of the man without God".

The *Notebooks* are a vast quarry of insights and perceptions and raids on the unknown. *Intimations of Christianity among the Ancient Greeks*, also posthumously published, is more nearly a coherent book. Like the Fathers of the Church, this Jewess pondered Greek epic, tragedy and philosophy, and saw in their gropings a foreshadowing of the Gospel. She is both more confident and more precise than they were in finding treasure trove. Even Prometheus is rehabilitated: he is seen not as someone who in pride competed with the gods and tried to become their equal but rather—via a hint in the Book of Job—as someone who suffered because he loved men too well.

Simone's account of Antigone was characteristically prepared for the factory workers among whom she had so improbably toiled, and Antigone becomes the symbol of resistance to the men of power who—by chance—happen to be the victors. Simone Weil is the perfect antidote to all those who have dreamed of a sun-lit Greece in which complacent harmony reigned. Her Greece, with all its tensions, is closer to our world, and she does not seem paradoxical or perverse in claiming that "the Gospels are the most marvellous expression of the Greek genius, as the *Iliad* is its first expression".

Gravity, the down-pull, is overcome in Simone Weil only by the counter-force of Grace. She had understood more clearly than anyone in this century that to speak of man's quest for God is to get the emphasis wrong. "In all the parables", she notes, "it is Christ who seeks men, or else the Father has them fetched by his messengers." God's quest for man—technically called Grace—comes first.

A Proust portrait?

By Morchard Bishop

The vigilant Proustian whom chance has led to the pleasant thirteenth-century Musée des Jacobins in the Breton town of Morlaix is likely to receive an unexpected though pleasurable shock when he perceives, confronting him upon a screen, an unfamiliar but decidedly impressive oil painting which uncompromisingly describes itself a portrait of Marcel Proust. This picture is clearly signed by its painter, Hélène Dufau, and it is as clearly dated, 1899; and it is this date which renders the portrait so interesting since there has hitherto been a great gap in the Proustian iconography between the photographs of the dandy with long moustaches taken by Otto in 1895 or 1896 and the seedy, woebegone Venice presentment of 1900—a gap, that is to say, of almost five years, five very formative years during which Proust passed from the age of twenty-four to that of twenty-nine and during which he published his first book, *Les plaisirs et les jours*.

In view of the potential importance of this portrait, I thought it worth while to approach the keeper of the Morlaix museum and to obtain his permission to have it photographed. It also seemed to me advisable to investigate a little further the provenance of the picture. M André Cariou, the keeper, could not have been kinder or more cooperative; he arranged to have the painting photographed, told me that it had never hitherto been reproduced, and gave me full permission to publish it. He also provided me with a rather curious history of the way in which the work had probably come into the possession of his Musée: I had already noticed that the screen upon which the Proust picture hung contained two other portraits—one of Gustave Geffroy, the eminent art critic, by Raffaelli, and one of Geffroy's mother. Geffroy, the intimate friend of Monet, had also been one of the earliest champions of Cézanne, who, in 1895, had painted a now very celebrated portrait of him.

Geffroy had come originally from Morlaix, and shortly after his death, about the year 1926, it appears that certain pictures once belonging to him had been presented to the museum of his native town with a view to setting up therein a "salle du souvenir G. Geffroy". The records are, however, too fragmentary to establish with certainty whether the Proust portrait came with these pictures, though there is a presumption that it did. Then, unfortunately, the war supervened and no one in Brittany had any more time to bother about paintings. The first actual mention, therefore, of the Proust canvas comes in a post-war museum checklist of 1947, and this is succeeded by a further catalogue reference of 1950 when it is described, rather disappointingly, as "the portrait of a young man".

The question thus arises as to at precisely what time this portrait "of a young man", which may or may not have been one of the Geffroy paintings, was translated into a portrait of Marcel Proust. It must have been at some period between 1950 and 1975, when I first encountered it. On this point M Cariou could give me no information.

To tackle the problem from the other end, that of the painter, is less complicated. Clémentine-Hélène Dufau (who signed usually as Hélène Dufau) was born in 1869 and died in 1937. She came to Paris in 1889 and studied at the Académie Julian under Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury. She won various prizes and, in 1898, a travelling scholarship which took her to Spain. There she developed a decorative style which is very evident in the picture under consideration, in which the glaucous [illegible] of the willows and the shimmering surface of the little stream set off to admiration the sober black-suited figure of her sitter. She had her literary connections, too, for among her works were a number of decorative panels which she executed for Edmond Rostand's house at Cambo in the Pyrenees; she also painted a portrait of Rostand's son, Maurice, who, perhaps significantly, was a friend of Proust. There is, however, no record that I can find of her ever meeting Proust, nor of any occasion upon which he might have sat to her.

The matter must therefore remain, at least for the time being, a mystery. The portrait is really an excellent piece of painting and one can but wish wholeheartedly that the delicate features which it depicts so skilfully are, in fact, those of the twenty-eight-year-old Proust. The hairline, at all events, seems right; so do the brown penetrating eyes, and the chin. It is possible that publication of this photograph may help to solve the problem. Certainly it is a great pity that the Morlaix records are unable to establish more definitely the link between Geffroy and the portrait; it is a still greater pity that they are unable to establish just how, between 1950 and 1975, this "portrait of a young man" suddenly assumed its present style. Someone, surely, must have had good reason for so sensational a transformation. What could it have been? Perhaps a note, now vanished, on the back of the canvas. One can only speculate, hopefully.

Addressing stations

As Janeites well know, Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch Hall, was "a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage". If today's lending libraries would only provide reference books to be borrowed (instead of failing to prevent them being stolen) more citizens would be able to find, like Sir Walter, "occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one". Facts, not fancies, are the great healers. Some turn to old *Bradshaws*, some to *Wisden*, some to the *Guinness Book of Records*; others may find that nothing restores rollicking good humour more quickly than a run through the Table of Precedence in *Whitaker*.

An irresistible entrant in the reference-for-pleasure stakes is likely to be the second, revised edition of *Debrett's Correct Form*, compiled and edited by Patrick Montague-Smith (423pp. Debrett's Peerage/Country Life. £4.95). Here is a window on to a rarefied world in which people are saying, often with anxious misgivings, "Darling, this is the Macnab" or "Have you met the Primus?" or are sitting down to write letters, again with misgivings, beginning "Dear Father Provincial" or "Dear Admiral Mackintosh of Mackintosh" (which is correct usage for a non-Scot of junior naval rank).

The browser may be shocked to find that the provisions of the Table of Precedence are not the glorious certitudes they seem. One of Mr Montague-Smith's footnotes (some of which are very good) says: "Age has sometimes to be considered: placing Midshipman the Duke of Loamshire above Admiral of the Fleet Sir Horatio Hornblower is no more likely to improve the Admiral's temper than it is to advance the Duke's naval career." So there is a difference between correct form and good form? The editor also says that regard should be had for important people in industry, the professions and the arts; these enjoy no official precedence, but their placing at table "should nonetheless recognize their importance in their respective fields". What a minefield is here! Is Midshipman the Duke of Loamshire going to take kindly to following the winner of the Booker Prize?

Much of *Correct Form* is taken up with the addressing of envelopes and the beginnings and endings of letters. The rules are given for both formal and social occasions and also for persons of "employee status". Ambassadors expect a social letter to end, "Believe me, my dear Ambassador, Yours (very) sincerely", but why should ambassadors expect correspondents to protest their credibility? Why is Professor Sir Edward Hailstorm a solecism, when Midshipman the Duke of Loamshire is so much funnier? It is satisfactory to know that in departmental circles "Your obedient servant" is obsolete; but the Pope still expects, from a non-Roman Catholic, "Your Holiness's obedient servant" (a Roman Catholic is a devoted and obedient child).

American writers notoriously fail to understand British titles, but as Sir Iain Moncrieffe of that Ilk says in a preface, so do our own gossip writers. Anybody who refers to Lady Mary de Vere as "Lady de Vere" cannot know much about her, he says. Real complications come when high-born ladies divorce, remarry or become widows, or all three. "Lady Mary Brown marries first the Duke of Blankshire and secondly Mr John Green. Upon her second marriage she is known as Lady Mary Green." Fair enough; but Mr Montague-Smith shows how things can get really out of hand. Some ladies helpfully let it be known how they like to be addressed, whether it is correct or not. Daphne du Maurier, who was Lady Browning before she became a Dame, is willing to be called Lady Browning, DBE, or Dame Daphne du Maurier, DBE.

The browser will note that it is correct to call a military rabbi "Padre"; that the Salvation Army rank of brigadier (inferior to that of lieutenant-colonel) is being phased out, not before time; that it is wrong for GLC councillors to put GLC after their names; and that the Queen rates a thank-you letter after a banquet but not after a garden party. A new American section explains how people come to be called John Howard III and even (a real-life example) Henry Peter Borie VIII. It also reveals that the White House press secretary is an "Honorable"; and it tells worried hostesses how to set our reminder cards to those who have failed to acknowledge dinner invitations.

Detail of "Hunter's Box", by Jo Bundy, all of whose works are based on boxes. Here a seven-foot-high wooden structure topped with the finely curved head and forelegs of a horse is shaped like the case of a grandfather clock. This romantic exterior conceals a protest against the barbaric custom of "blooding": the door in the case opens to reveal the fibreglass figure of a girl with bloodstains on her face, a bloodstained fox's brush, and a laughing hound. "Hunter's Box" is to be seen at the Nicholas Treadwell Gallery, 36 Chiltern Street, London W1, as part of the exhibition "Sporting Pictures 1976", open until January 22. The pictures are not the conventional representations of yesteryear, but modern and often unorthodox approaches to boxing, bullfighting, cricket and athletics, as well as hunting, shooting and fishing.

Fifty years on . . .

The leading article in the last TLS *of 1926 was an essay by T. Sturge Moore on "Imagination and Intellect". "Writing becomes great by dint of imagination. . ." it began. "Critics have become too intellectual, and find it more and more difficult either to persuade or to illumine. The intellect is subaltern, and its mutiny endangers humane [illegible] the eighteenth century was therefore [illegible] century when intellectual values were allowed to "submerge all-roundness":*

In paying homage to Dryden Mr T. S. Eliot has been led to overlook the imaginative plenitude in which the generally conceded superiority of Milton's and Shelley's poetry consists. He did not mention the fact that, as Gautier put it, "the visible world did not exist" for Dryden, or was treated by him as merely heard about, reported on, and referred to in general terms, without precision. This Laureate had great and magnificent qualities to which neither Milton nor Shelley can lay claim; he came nearer Shakespeare than either in important excellencies, but could never approach that complete poise of human faculties for which we reserve the name poetry. His eyes were so jaded or casual that they never moved his splendid energies to delight; and, though his social discernment may have been keener than theirs, he was comparatively near-sighted as to the extent and [illegible] perspectives of imagination. Many of his lines might be slipped among Milton's or Shakespeare's best without disgrace, but no passage, no poem; for this his mind was not sufficiently complex; it always sags to one side, and cannot remain at poise; it is, as Mr Eliot himself insisted, commonplace. Neither his intellect nor his emotions can bathe in the exquisite and poignant sensuousness that refreshes Milton and Shelley.

But they, at not infrequent moments, are as open, as orderly, as apposite, and as powerful, as Dryden himself. Is he not inferior even to Ben Jonson, who produced a few poems and passages (fewer even than Shelley) as perfect as anything in the language? Think of "The Triumph of Charis", "Slow, slow fresh fount", "Drink to me only", "It is not growing like a tree"! Yet the bulk of Ben Jonson's verse is more lopsided even than Dryden's—whom possibly Pope may also excel, as the eighteenth century believed. Certainly in malice and ingenuity he does. Yet he is probably less complete, less human, readier [illegible] generosity of temper. For we must go to Chaucer, and those who derive from him, for the fully poetic use of the rhymed couplet. Pope too often grins at us from behind the identical bars that imprisoned Iago; in whose jesting, as has been truly pointed out, Shakespeare foreshadowed the possibility of such a gaol. Trim malice, like [illegible] mixed in a cake, while promising to surpass bread, dismays the palate. You might as well compare the flight of the great bustard to that of swallow or eagle as Dryden's imagination to Shelley's or Milton's. Yet for traversing plains with undiminished vigour he is matchless. He never soars, or dances in the air like a butterfly; but he holds a straight course at his own level and stands as stoutly on the ground when he alights as before he started, and, with head erect, is pleased to find his whereabouts have still that familiar unalarming openness.

Remember This

You won't remember this, but I will;
A gradually tightening avenue of trees
And where it locks
What seems from here the most yearningly delicate
Intrusion of white leaves
May yet blacken the unclouded pool of sun
That summons you.

Keep going
Even though I mean to stay; keep going
Even though I can't any more imagine
What I'll find most hard to bear
On the way back from here
On the way home
To where we first vowed we'd try again to say:
You won't remember this.

Ian Hamilton

The anarchists of Patagonia

By Bruce Chatwin

OSVALDO BAYER:
Los Vengadores de la Patagonia Trágica
Volume 1: 217pp
Volume 2: 361pp
Volume 3: 292pp
Buenos Aires: Editorial Galerna.

South American Field Marshal—an oil painting of 1970 by the Colombian artist Fernando Botero: an inflated and bloated figure, as are all the military officials, saints, whores, clerics, cats, cakes and fruit painted by this artist and reproduced in Fernando Botero *by Klaus Gallwitz (88pp. Thames and Hudson. £5). Botero also "paraphrases" paintings from the past (see cover). He sees art as an attempt to "create sensuousness through form", and though his swollen, esculent figures may appear fatuous or sinister he denies any apparent social criticism. But then he has also said that "he does not consider his figures to be fat at all, on the contrary, quite slender".*

In 1920 an anarchist revolution, called in the names of Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta, broke over the British-run sheep farms of Southern Patagonia. Its instigator was a lanky Gallician of twenty-three called Antonio Soto. He had chestnut hair and a thrilling voice and was slightly wall-eyed; he had been piously brought up by maiden aunts at El Ferrol, where he was a contemporary of Francisco Franco. At seventeen he read Tolstoy's condemnation of military service, skipped to Argentina to avoid his own, and drifted into the theatre and the fringes of the anarchist movement.

Employed as a scene shifter in a travelling Spanish theatre company, Soto ended up in Rio Gallegos, a dismal seaport near the Straits of Magellan. Here a compatriot told him of the plight of the migrant farm workers, mostly mestizo Indians from the green but over-populated island of Chiloé. The situation appealed to Soto's messianic impulses. He switched from the theatre into politics, got himself elected secretary-general of the local workers' union and, with a crew of amateur revolutionaries, led his followers to loot and burn, and finally left them to the firing squads.

Osvaldo Bayer is a left-wing Argentine historian of German descent. The facts speak for themselves; and the author is a brave man who has risked his life to publish them. The revolution of 1920-21 does indeed read like a prophecy of contemporary events in Chile and Argentina, though it must be said that Bayer's lapses into rhetoric and his polemical outbursts aimed at current military and foreign intervention in Latin America rather weaken the force of his narrative.

Patagonia, the backdrop to this story, is the wind-blown tip of the continent below latitude 42°, and is split between Chile and Argentina. The Chilean coasts are choked with rain forest, but east of the Andes there are deserts of grey-green thornscrub and grassy pampas that remind one of Nevada or Wyoming. After 1900, Patagonia actually became an extension of the rough-riding West: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid came down and robbed the Bank of Tarapacá and London in Rio Gallegos in 1905.

Magellan gave the name "Patagon" to the Tehuelche Indian giant he saw dancing on the shore at St Julian in 1520. The word is supposed to mean "Big-Foot" for the size of his moccasins, but this is not the case. The Tehuelches wore dog-head battle masks, and the Grand Patagon is a dog-headed monster in the chivalric romance, *Primaleón of Greece*, printed in Spain seven years before Magellan sailed. (Hence Caliban, who invoked the Tehuelche god Setebos, has additional claims to Patagonian ancestry—vide Trinculo's: "I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster.") The Tehuelches were guanaco hunters, whose size and booming voices belied their docile character. And after the sheep-farmers came, they died out—from drink, despair, disease and intermarriage.

Darwin had written of Patagonia: "The curse of sterility is on the land", and for most of the nineteenth century Argentina had ignored it. There were a few Argentine settlements down the coast, but most of the colonizing was Chilean. Chile occupied the Straits of Magellan in 1843, one day ahead of the French, and by the late 1870s her convict station at Punta Arenas had grown into a thriving port. Then Argentine woke up, realizing that Darwin's estimate was ill-judged and, as the price of her neutrality while her neighbour was at war with Peru, forced a division of Patagonia roughly along the watershed of the Andes. The Chileans felt they had been tricked out of the best land and always looked for opportunities to get it back.

Meanwhile, an English resident of Punta Arenas brought the first sheep over from the Falklands in 1877. When they multiplied, others took the hint. The two big pioneers were a charmless Asturian, José Menéndez, and his son-in-law, Moritz Braun, the son of a Jewish butcher from the Baltic. Between them, the Braun and Menéndez families got colossal land grants from the Argentine Government, throttled the territory with their company La Anónima, and imported stud flocks from New Zealand, farm-managers from the British army, and shepherds from the Highlands.

They became immensely rich. When he died in 1918 Don José left the surplus of his millions to Alfonso XIII of Spain. In Punta Arenas you can still see the Palais Braun imported piecemeal from France in 1902, where, in a setting of damasks, Córdoba leathers, hygienic marbles, and a painting of amorous geese by Picasso's father, the Edwardian era has survived the Allende regime.

Other foreigners also got land in Patagonia. The Land Department in Buenos Aires deliberately favoured Anglo-Saxons, since they were identified with Progress, and such Argentine proprietors as there were tended to install British managers. The result was that Santa Cruz province looked like an outpost of the Empire administered by Spanish-speaking officials. Some of the British farms were—and still are—run by big outfits, quoted on the London Stock Exchange. But many settlers were "kelpers" from the Falklands, with memories of the Highland clearances and nowhere else to go. Their estancias, though almost bankrupt, are still smartly painted up and remind one of an English boys' boarding school; the headmaster's house sits with its herbaceous borders, lawn-sprayers and bound copies of *Punch* and *Blackwood's*, while the peons sleep in spartan dormitories, have their orders posted on blackboards and make trivial purchases in the farm shop.

Bayer is not quite fair to the *latifundistas*. They had laboured for twenty-five years, and their position was still extremely precarious; what one government gave, another might take back without compensation so the temptation to get money out was irresistible. Because of their cheap labour force, Patagonian sheep-farmers had been able to undercut their Australian and New Zealand competitors and throughout the 1914-18 War there was a boom, but in the slump that followed there came new taxes, inflation, customs' controls and workers' agitation. The farmers of Santa Cruz began to compare themselves with Russian aristocrats stranded on the steppe at the mercy of violent peasants.

One issue of the *Magellan Times*, the local English newspaper, carries a picture of a Russian country house, its owner grovelling to a slab-sided muscle man, with the caption: "A nocturnal orgy of the Maximalists at the estate of Kislodovsk. 5,000 roubles or your lives!" Alongside an advertisement for "party frocks by Marcelle in beige georgette with a silver sash" was a profile of Trotsky, "a sullen despot in the style of Nero, opening his murderous dispatches with a gold paper knife that once belonged to the Tsars . . . note the sullen indifference with which he treats beautiful linen table cloths".

The peons were almost all from Chiloé. They were tougher and poorer than the sun-loving Argentines and worked harder for less. Besides which, their employers could dump trouble-makers over the border and earn the approval of the authorities, who saw in the large numbers of Chilean nationals, a threat to Argentine security. Bayer describes the Chilotes thus:

All day on horseback; their backsides calloused; in heat and cold; without women; without affection; without children, books or schooling. Always wearing the same submissive smile; always the clumsy evasiveness of the Chilean peon. Men with skins the colour of those who never wash. Numberless men with glassy stares. Men repressed, looking as if capon flesh were incarnate in their lifeless faces, in their bodies without beauty, in clothes fit only to cover their nakedness, not to keep out the cold. . . .

But this picture of the Chilotes as mindless victims of foreign greed does scant justice to their own culture, for the folklore of these steel-hard people is full of hellish visions of the outside world and prophesies a time when they will sweep the land of their oppressors. Like other pinioned races, their reserve will suddenly break down in bouts of sex, drink and violence (and did so before the coming of the Spaniards). This aspect of their character is something Bayer has overlooked.

Rio Gallegos in 1920 was a grid of streets lined with corrugated iron buildings, with the smoke-stacks of the Swift Corporation's freezing plant roaring above the prison yard. Antonio Soto had found a mentor, a bald and dandified Spanish lawyer José María Borrero, who had left the University of Santiago de Compostella with a doctorate in theology and drifted to the end of the world where he ran a bi-weekly newspaper *La Verdad* and laid into the Anglo-Saxon plutocracy. His language thrilled his compatriots and they began to imitate his style: ". . . In this society of Judases and Pulchinellas Borrero alone preserves the rare integrity of man . . . among these egotistic gluttons of lucre . . . these twittering pachyderms with their snapping teeth and castrated consciences."

Borrero introduced Soto to the local judge, Ismael Viñas, a youngish demagogue, who also hated the foreign pirates and had done his best to ruin a Scottish sheep-farming company that had contravened the Argentine fisc. The trio formed an alliance against the landowners, hoteliers, and general traders, and against two men in particular. One was the Acting Governor of Santa Cruz, Edelmiro Correa Falcón, a tweedy anglophile and property agent, the chairman of the local Sociedad Rural. The other was Ibon Noya, the Spanish owner of the Buick Garage, and president of the Rio Gallegos branch of the Argentine Patriotic League, a right-wing organization formed to combat the bacillus of foreign ideology. In the case of Correa Falcón it was a case of love turned to hate; Judge Viñas had insulted the Acting Governor's wife by appearing at a civic function on the arm of his concubine.

In September Soto began his career as a revolutionist by organizing a strike of waiters at the Grand Hotel. The police chief of Rio Gallegos was a big, bad-tempered Scot called Ritchie whose immediate reaction was to put all the rabble-rousers in jail. By the time he awoke to the real threat of a General Strike and the pitiful size of his own force, the judge had already ordered the prisoners' release, but the strike spread and paralysed some estancias which were in the middle of lambing.

Soto then hoisted his political colours, the red and black of anarchism. His next move, touching but not entirely to the point, was a march of Chilotes to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the shooting of the Catalan educator, Francisco Ferrer. Soto insisted that the workers were honouring Ferrer, as Catholics honoured the Maid of Orleans, or the Mohammedans Mohammed, but the police chief banned the demonstration, giving Viñas a chance to ridicule his ignorance of Ferrer's place in the history of ideas. The judge squashed the ban and the march went ahead.

By the last week in October, the *Magellan Times* was giving gloomy warnings of unrest. On the night of November 1 Soto escaped murder at the hands of a hired Chilean—the knife blade hit the silver watch in his waistcoat. Convinced of his mission, Soto called a general strike and marshalled a list of minimum demands for estancia workers. The tone of the document was quite sedate. Borrero and the Judge wanted only to rout the other faction, not to topple the system. But Soto insisted on a final clause; that his own Federacion Obrera should mediate all disputes between employers and their men and concluded with a barrage of insults against the land-owners and their system that "placed the value of a man alongside that of a mule, a sheep or a horse". The farmers offered better wages and conditions but would not let the chorus-boy step between them and their men. As they hoped, their offer produced a schism among the workers. Soto and the anarchists rejected the terms; the syndicalists accepted them, speaking of Soto's "mental obtuseness and total ignorance of how to run a strike". Soto replied that the syndicalists were pimps for the local brothel, La Chocolatería.

Isolated from the moderates, he then took up with some "propagandists by the deed", who called themselves the Red Council and wore red armbands. The leaders were two Italians, one known as the "68" who had once made shepherdesses in a Dresden porcelain factory and the other a red-bearded army deserter called El Toscano. Their followers were a fluid mixture of German *Wandervögels*, Russian anarchists, two Scots, some North American cowboy-outlaws, and the usual corps of Chilotes.

At the head of up to 500 rough riders, the Red Council swooped on isolated farms, burning, requisitioning firearms, provisions and liquor, and taking owners and managers hostage. The centre of their operations were the steppes east of Lago Argentino within easy reach of the Cordillera. In Rio Gallegos Commissioner Ritchie sent his sub-commissioner Micheri to size up the situation. Also in the party were Sergeant Sosa "the Peon-Beater" and Jorge Pérez Millán Témperley, a pretty upper-class boy with a weakness for uniforms, who had joined the Gendarmería as a subaltern.

Over Christmas Micheri's party patrolled the lake and beat up peons at random, then retreated back across the pampas in two Ford cars. Passing the hotel of El Cerrito they fell into a Red Council ambush. Two policemen and a chauffeur were killed, the subcommissioner was wounded, and Témperley was shot in the genitals.

Soto went into hiding and Borrero went to jail. When he came out he found that Ritchie had raided the offices of *La Verdad* and destroyed the typeface. In Buenos Aires, President Hipólito Yrigoyen received a firm note from the British Embassy and decided to send in the troops. His choice fell on a small but patriotic officer, Lieutenant Colonel Héctor Benigno Varela.

With the tenth Argentine Cavalry there sailed Captain Ignacio Yza, the appointed Governor of Santa Cruz who had done everything to delay taking up his appointment. He was a radical but knew nothing about Patagonia. He and Varela took the strikers' part against the foreign land-sharks, dismissed Ritchie, ignoring the warnings of Correa Falcón, and offered free pardons to all who surrendered their arms. The Red Council were suspicious but, in the best anarchist tradition, allowed themselves to be overruled.

Soto came out of hiding and claimed a total victory over the army, private property and the State. "You'll see", Ibon Noya told Varela. "Once you go this will start up again." "If it starts up again", the Colonel said, "I'll come back and shoot them by dozens."

Noya was right. Soto was puffed up with success and made the Governor's life impossible. He tried to organize a strike in the Swift freezer, but the new police chief outwitted him and herded the workers back into the factory. As winter closed in, Soto went to Buenos Aires to canvass for support at the eleventh Workers' Congress, but the professionals bickered over the policies of Lenin and Zinoviev and ignored the Patagonian delegate. Meanwhile the coastal towns of Patagonia were convulsed with arson, sabotage and at least one murder. By spring, Soto was dreaming of a revolt that would spread up from Patagonia and engulf the country. He had three lieutenants—a Bakuninist ex-waiter called Outerelo; a syndicalist official Albino Argüelles; and a courteous and silent gaucho called Facón Grande for the size of his knife. Dr Borrero was conspicuous for his absence. The wreck of *La Verdad* had silenced him and he saw the dangers of providing the army a second time. Besides, he was having an affair with an estanciero's daughter and had taken advantage of depressed land prices to buy a little place of his own. Then it was discovered that he had, all along, been on the payroll of the Brauns and Menéndezes; the anarchist broadsheets spoke of Judas's thirty pieces of silver.

The Red Council began the second phase of the revolution on their own, but were betrayed to the police and bundled off to jail. Soto should have taken the hint, but he still believed the government was neutral, and sent "evangelists of Bakunin" round the sheep farms giving orders to raid and take hostages. On the whole the prisoners were well treated, but a Mr Robbins of Torquay cut his throat in a fit of depression.

President Yrigoyen called Varela a second time and told him to use whatever measures were necessary. The *Magellan Times* commented: "So far the Argentine Cavalry has done nothing to justify its presence, but we hope that Commandante Varela is preparing a campaign that will completely stamp out this revolt and that the bandits will receive a lesson they will not forget for a good number of years."

This time Varela had indeed come "not to pardon but to clean". (He used the words *limpiar* and *depurar*.) He interpreted his instructions as tacit permission for a bloodbath, but since Congress had just abolished the death penalty, he had to inflate Soto's Chilotes into "military forces perfectly armed and better munitioned ... enemies of the country in which they live". Many, it was claimed, were *salitreros* from the nitrate mines in northern Chile; when three Chilean carabineers were captured inside the frontier this was evidence that the Chilean government lay behind the revolt; a Russian Menshevik with notebook of cyrillic characters plainly signified the red hand of Moscow. (Bayer categorically denies Chile's involvement, though members of the Argentine Frontier Commission assured me that documents exist to the contrary.)

The ill-armed strikers melted away before the troops. Varela filed reports of stirring gunfights and arsenals captured, but the *Magellan Times* for once told the truth: "Various bands of rebels, finding their cause lost, have surrendered and the bad element among them have been shot."

The army's performance was one of outstanding cowardice. On five occasions the soldiers got the peons to surrender by promising to respect their lives. Each time the killings began straight afterwards: they were shot into graves they dug themselves or their corpses burned on bonfires of thornscrub. Borrero made an exaggerated estimate of 1,500 in his book, *La Patagonia Trágica*, but the number of the dead is uncertain. Officially the firing squads did not exist.

Soto's megalomaniac dream finally collapsed at La Anita, the prize Menéndez estancia, ringed by snowy mountains, with a view of the Moreno Glacier sliding through black forests into a turquoise lake. Here, with 500 men, he held his hostages in the big green and white house with its *art nouveau* conservatory. When he heard of the massacres on the plain, and of Captain Viñas Ibarra's column not far up the valley, he knew his number was up. His character became more frigid and austere, while his talk of the dignity of man more than ever obscured any understanding of real men. At nights he went off to sleep alone, and the Chilotes, who required their leaders to share every detail of their lives, began to loathe him. At his last conference, the hardliners, led by two Germans, wanted to barricade the shearing shed with wool bales and fight to the last man but Soto said he was not dog meat, he would run for it and continue the revolution elsewhere. And the Chilotes preferred to trust even the Argentine army rather than Soto's promises.

Soto sent two peons to Viñas [illegible] to ask for terms. "Terms for what?" he asked and told them to make terms with Jesus Christ. Subsequently he demanded an unconditional surrender, but said he would spare their lives. That night Soto and a few others rode out over the Cordillera and escaped into Chile. (He died at Punta Arenas in the 1960s, filled with remorse, the proprietor of a small restaurant run on anarchist principles.) In the morning the soldiers freed the hostages and herded the peons into the shearing shed. One of the hostages, who had been a professional Indian killer, said he wanted thirty-seven corpses for his thirty-seven stolen horses. The 300 Chilotes thought they would be expelled over the border into Chile. But at seven next morning the door [illegible]

of the shed opened and a sergeant ostentatiously distributed picks to a work-party. The others heard them marching off and then the chink of picks on stone. "They're digging graves", they said. The door opened again at eleven and the men were led out in groups for the *estancieros* to pick out the men they wanted back at work. It was just like sorting sheep.

The unwanted ones—mouths lowered, and eyes distended—were led off past the sheep-dip and round a low scrubby hill. From the yard the others heard the crackle of shots and saw turkey buzzards soaring in from the mountains. About 120 men died that day. One of the executioners said: "They went to their deaths with a passivity that was truly astonishing."

The British community was overjoyed. The *Magellan Times* praised Varela's "splendid courage, running about the firing line as though on parade. . . . Patagonians should take their hats off to the tenth Argentine Cavalry, these very gallant gentlemen." Ibon Noya's Patriotic League was already urging Varela's appointment as Governor. At a luncheon, Noya spoke of the "sweet emotion of these moments", and of his "satisfaction mixed with gratitude at being rid of the plague." The colonel replied modestly he had only done his duty as a soldier, and the twenty British present, being men of few Spanish words, broke into song: "For he's a jolly good fellow. . . ."

In Buenos Aires it was a different story. There was no hero's welcome for Varela, only graffiti reading "SHOOT THE CANNIBAL OF THE SOUTH!" Few left-wingers cared too much about Soto or the Chilotes, but the Army had, unwittingly, killed a Syndicalist official and Congress was in uproar. Yrigoyen appointed Varela director of a cavalry school and hoped the crisis would simmer down. But at dawn on January 27, 1923, as Varela was on his way to work he was approached by a tall, red-haired man in a dark suit carrying a copy of the *Deutsche La Plata Zeitung* and a bomb. As the bomb exploded, the assassin fired his Colt twice and pierced Varela's jugular. "I have revenged my brothers", he mumbled in bad Spanish as he fell, "I do not need to live".

The killer was Kurt Wilkens, a thirty-six year old German wanderer from Schleswig-Holstein, who had been a miner and Anarchist in the United States until the immigration authorities expelled him. In Buenos Aires he washed cars by day and read great books by night. In his lodgings police found framed photos of Tolstoy and Kropotkin, and copies of Goethe's *Werther* and Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*. He claimed to have made the bomb himself, but there were no traces and the police were sceptical.

One of the mourners at Varela's funeral was an effeminate young man who moped round the coffin, sobbing and swearing revenge. The murderer, who had recovered, was put in the Prison of the Encausaderos ("those awaiting trial").

Wilkens' new warder was strangely nervous; he paced up and down in the hot sticky night until his spell was over, then he entered the cell, rubbed the barrel of his Mauser against the German's shoulder blades, asked him: "Are you Wilkens?" "Jawohl!", came the answer, and he fired. The young warder rushed to his superior and said: "I have avenged the death of my cousin, Colonel Varela."

The warder, the same boy who behaved so strangely at Varela's funeral, was Jorge Pérez Millán Témperley, last seen at El Cerrito and now permanently unhinged by the wound to his genitals. How he became Wilkens's warder was never explained, for the inquiry smoothed the issues over. He got off with a light sentence, eight years, in view of his "physical abnormality" and was soon transferred to a hospital for the criminally insane.

One of his fellow internees was a Yugoslav midget, a compulsive talker who had once murdered his doctor. On Monday afternoon, February 9, 1925, Témperley, in a black mood, was writing a letter to the national President of the Argentine Patriotic League, when Lukič, the Yugoslav, poked his head round the door of the cubicle, shouted "This is for Wilkens!", and shot him.

The mechanics of vengeance had taken their final turn. The question was: Who gave Lukič the gun? The police eventually pinned this on another internee, Boris Vladimirovič, a Russian of some pedigree, a biologist, artist, and revolutionary writer, who had lived in Switzerland and known Lenin. After the 1905 Revolution he took to drink and then went to Argentina to begin again on a cattle ranch in Santa Fé. But the old life drew him back. In 1919 he bungled the robbery of a *bureau de change* in Buenos Aires to raise funds for an anarchist publication. A man was killed and Vladimirovič got twenty-five years in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, the prison at the end of the world. But the cold, the clouds and black water drove him mad. He sang the songs of the Motherland, and for the sake of quiet, the Governor had him transferred to hospital in the Capital. That Sunday visiting day, two Russian friends brought him the revolver in a basket of fruit. The case was hard to prove, and there was no trial. But Boris Vladimirovič disappeared for ever, paralysed, into the House of the Dead.

Last year, I met near Punta Arenas an old Chilote sheep shearer who had escaped the massacre and had known Antonio Soto. His hands were knotted with arthritis, and he sat wearing a beret huddled over a wood stove. When I asked about the Revolution he said: "The Army had permission to kill everybody"—as if one could hope for nothing else. But when he talked of Soto and the leaders, he shook, and, as if surprised by the violence of his own voice, shouted: "They were not workers. They never worked in their lives. Barkeepers! Hairdressers! Acrobats! *Artistas!*"

Civics in shantytown

By George Philip

DAVID COLLIER:
Squatters and Oligarchs
Authoritarian Rule and Policy Change in Peru
187pp. Johns Hopkins University Press, £7.65.

To a European visitor, there are few more striking signs of Latin American underdevelopment than the shanty-towns which ring nearly every major city. Initially, these were regarded as areas of potential danger, and dry tinder for the flames of social revolution. More recently, however, research has drawn a very different picture of these areas, and coloured it in shades of Victorian virtue, upward mobility, self-help and political conservatism being the typical attributes of urban migrants.

David Collier's study of the Lima settlements brings out these features clearly, and relates them to the existing power structure. He documents the interplay of interest between squatter, landowner and politician as these are reflected in issues of urban settlement. He shows that there are important communities of interest between these groups and much scope for bargaining; settlers want services and security of tenure, politicians want votes and guarantees of political stability. From this interplay, several patterns of politics have emerged. The political machine, pure and simple, the more regimented and planned provision of services under "institutional" military dictatorship, and the self-help emphasis of committed liberals, have all made their appearance at different times.

Much of Mr Collier's account is excellent, especially his discussion of General Odría (president of Peru 1948-56) who came to power with the full backing of the civilian elite and went on to seek a political base of his own in the settlement areas in his efforts to carve out a position as Peru's Perón. The high quality of the discussion is maintained as it moves on from Odría to cover various civilian governments and the first half of Velasco's regime, which the author sees as in some ways more authoritarian and generally less successful than its predecessors.

The rapid post-war development of the manufacturing sector of the Peruvian economy and the consequent change in the economic interests of the landed elite are not given the attention they deserve. Nevertheless, the book is extremely interesting and some parts of it are very good indeed.

TWO POEMS

Nocturne

The great world turns
Cold of her own will, making stone
Of the hot heart, the rest slowly
Chilling even
Her skirts of dirt
Under which we have been mucking
About, rifling in their folds for
Flecks of gold. All of which causes
Her, enthroned in
Rock, to twitch the hem of her garb without a word.

Within the warm
Dark at the edge of the earth where
Vacancy of rock begins, we
Lie in the soft shadows of the sheets between us.
Through the windows comes the city
Light that is not
That of moon, nor yet the dark light
Of earth that will
Fall over our final length when height collapses.
It is the light in which we lie.

In the breath of
Nightwind that shakes
The windowframes
A whisper has run out through the glass and become
The shattered lass of the courtyard,
Anna Mañana, clattering
Across shadows ; round her shoulders a shawl of wind
Twitches ; she sits waiting among
Dull bins and shining dark bags to
Regain a cold quondam body.

If the light lying across her
Lap makes her the Witch of Insinuation, then
We can only know her sister,
The bright Queen of Meaning, by her
Impalpability : in the clarity of
Daylight she is not to be seen,
But known by the radiance which is
Hers, giving back
What darkness keeps
Taking from us.

Call her Celia Manyhorses,
Indian giver : we remain in
Falling light, all that is left us,
Even for the eye that rises.
But this way of being unseen
Is not that of the most cloaked One :
Robed half in the glow of unbudded rose, half in
Blue too deep to read, beyond she dwells, but governs
Here and ever,
She who has arranged the marriage of dawn and death ;

She whom we know by her iron
Chain, by her dry breath of what must
Be. It is she
Whom we have known all along, who prepared our dream
Of earth and breath ;
She who leaves us
In the hard glare of morning with
Images out in the courtyard
Of dirt and wind,
Of what we are.

John Hollander

Setting a Snare

Your problem is getting a small game animal
To trust your world
(Which he thinks is his) just long enough to be
Yanked away from it.
Like you, he's fond of walking old paths and playing
Safe under cover,
So framing his trail with wire and a bent sapling
Hair-triggered by sticks,
You can offer a passage under a fallen log
And into a gallows
More [illegible] than any common hangman's !
He knows all trees
Have a way of falling, that saplings may look crippled,
And he's slipped through
Strand after strand elsewhere without a slipknot.
If you're sure the setting
Seems innocent enough to pass his furtive senses,
Then make this noose
Be you in your absence, performing without flinching
The act of strangling.
Ideally, when you come back, you will have missed
The unpleasant details,
Which needn't bother us now, and will find harmless
What hangs there and hangs there.
Out of reach of the other animals, it waits
For you and you alone.

David Wagoner

To the Editor

'In Defence of Dr Hoeppli'

Sir,—Dr Hoeppli is his own best defender. His postscript proves to be too long for this journal, so I will quote only two passages to which Hugh Trevor-Roper refers. One has to do with Hoeppli's having forced Sir Edmund Backhouse to admit that his meeting with Rimbaud could not have occurred. Of this Professor Trevor-Roper says (Letters, December 17),

> Unlike de Margerie, who satisfied himself that Backhouse's whole "Memoirs" were fantasy, and thereupon put aside his own notes of conversations with him, Hoeppli raised the question with Backhouse, solemnly reported Backhouse's absurd "correction" and while reserving his own judgment on this particular lapse of "memory" continued to cherish the "Memoirs" for their "historical" value.

What Hoeppli actually wrote was as follows:

> The editor by a number of questions was able more or less to ascertain that this meeting could not have taken place. Sir Edmund apparently realizing this left in the manuscript the description of the nearly impossible meeting but some days later added a few lines about a cobbler "Rimbot", a friend of Verlaine whom he had also met. In his conversations he admitted that he had possibly confused this scholar with the famous Rimbaud in some other recollections which he had told the editor without however including them in his essay on Verlaine.
>
> It will be easily understood that on such an occasion, the editor with all respect due to Sir Edmund somewhat wondered to what degree his stories could be regarded as representing facts considering the extreme facility by which the author introduced on the spur of the moment conveniently new persons and altered the selection after his former statements had become untenable.

The passage indicates quite sufficient scepticism on Dr Hoeppli's part, and no solemnity.

The other passage is the one frequently repeated by Hugh Trevor-Roper, Hoeppli's remark that the memoir was "fundamentally based on facts". But the context of this remark is not at all what one would expect from someone so insistent upon context as Professor Trevor-Roper. Hoeppli wrote as follows:

> In the editor's opinion, "The Dead Past" and "Décadence Mandchoue" are not purely imaginary but are fundamentally based on facts. How far the facts have been distorted by a confused memory and to what extent purely imaginary happenings have been added can only be judged by a future critical examination which will have to make use of all available documents.

Concerning "The Dead Past", it should be possible to verify whether Verlaine was actually for a brief period teacher in St George's School.

These examples might well seem to indicate that the last "victim" of Sir Edmund Backhouse was not Dr Hoeppli, who emerges smiling and questioning, but, lamentably, Hugh Trevor-Roper, who, in his prosecutor's zeal for convictions all round, no longer distinguishes between coneys and coneycatchers. With the above quotations, characteristically sceptical, from Dr Hoeppli, and those quoted from him in *Commentary* (November 26), readers will be able to evaluate Professor Trevor-Roper's declarations in *A Hidden Life* that Hoeppli presented Backhouse as "a reliable authority" (page 239), "patently honest" (page 236), and, as to the memoir, that Hoeppli "had no doubts of its truth" (page 236).

RICHARD ELLMANN.
New College, Oxford.

'Unity Mitford'

Sir,—The issue in your columns between David Pryce-Jones (December 17) and myself was whether I had taken the "advice" of Streicher rather than sent him a stock reply for his "message". Mr Pryce-Jones in his lengthy evasion does not mention the question. Yet thanking such a foreigner for his "advice" appears quite clearly in a passage of his book which moved Mr Forbes to his strictures and would indeed have been at variance with the usual charge of the period that I was arrogant.

When challenged on television (November 17) to state the source of his quotation Mr Pryce-Jones replied, "*The Times*". Research in the files of *The Times* failed to reveal it, and inquiry of his publishers so long ago as November 26 failed to secure an answer. Are we therefore to conclude that the quotation supplied in his book does not exist?

OSWALD MOSLEY.
1 rue des Lacs, Orsay 91400, France.

Sir,—While all deficient scholarship and slovenly research is to be deplored and apologized for (which in this instance I hereby do), I cannot nevertheless let Herr Feldman (Letters, December 17) quite get away with his "(*sic*)" joke at my expense about the indeed truly unforgettable (and by me unforgotten) film of *Jew Süss*. It was an excess of empathy, rather than of sympathy, with Unity Mitford, whom I did not know, that caused me to suggest that Feuchtwanger's work had for her been "just the book of the unforgettable film". For it was only when I had myself seen the movie starring the great Conrad Veidt (who in his day also played, *inter alios*, Prussian officers, spies and even, *pour ne pas le nommer*, Jesus Christ himself) that I bothered to take it down from my parents' bookshelves. However, it was not until 1934 that the film directed by Lothar Mendes and produced by Sir Michael Balcon (who had since 1924 Weimar days had a working partnership with Erich Pommer in Berlin's Neubabelsberg studios—a recollection that further muddled my memory) was first shown, whereas David Pryce-Jones writes that Unity's copy of the book bore the date 1930, only five years after its first publication, so I must stand corrected. I have since been credibly informed that she had seen both the silent (1923) and talkie (1933) version of Temple Thurston's *Wandering Jew* in which Matheson Lang so memorably "hammed it up".

I saw all these films and read Feuchtwanger's book at an impressionable age without being corrupted by them either racially or politically (or both), nor were they in fact corrupting. As for the Streicherisch-Stürmesisch Nazi version to which Herr Feldman refers in his letter, this was not given its first German showing until the Battle of Britain was at its height. I have never seen any copy of it that may still be preserved in some archive of cinematico-political horrors but I accept Herr Feldman's categorization of it as "iniquitous". As for Sir Oswald Mosley's criticism of my review (Letters, December 10), it has been well dealt with by Mr Pryce-Jones himself (Letters, December 17). Suffice it to add that I regarded it then as now "shameful" for any Englishman to send any gratuitous communication whatsoever, *a fortiori* one so sycophantic and racist as Mosley's toadying telegram, to the Jew-baiting criminal Streicher, and I was sorry to see him contriving to secure in the media so much free publicity for himself out of the publication of Mr Pryce-Jones's really not very significant book about the poor, silly young sister-in-law whom he so ruthlessly dismissed in his television chat with the author as being someone he had simply been unable to "uso" (*sic*).

ALASTAIR FORBES.

'The Glass Cottage'

Sir,—Impatience with the relentlessly *ad feminam* style of argument used by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove (Letters, November 12) inspires some baffled questions:

(1) What is a "privileged position" for sexual experience?

(2) Do lecturers, at Warwick or anywhere, occupy such a position?

(3) Do lecturers not as a matter of course "talk to their working-class students" or for that matter to people quite unconnected with universities?

However the debate (if it is that) began not with the social mores of dons, or the sociology of menstruation, but with the politics of fiction; and given that the authors insist that social influences powerfully control people's response to their own bodies, it is odd that they will not allow that such influences also operate on the reading of novels. Far from paying the compliment of withdrawing from my former position, I repeat it by quoting the "printed review":

> . . some criticisms are to the point: to demur at the fact that the murdered woman has had more reality and power dead than alive, or at the equations sex/murder cunt/wound, is not to resist myth but a modern piece of anti-feminism pretending to be a myth.

Equations made metaphorically in a book are scarcely the same thing as the book in its entirety. The authors, however, are determined to merge parts with whole. They assert that "the book *says*" something, and then quote in support the words of one character, speaking as a spirit, in one scene not without comic irony.

It seems unlucky that writers who are so alert to myth should offer themselves as the ordained interpreters of "myth"/"myth" is, almost by definition, so culturally flexible that it resists exclusive meanings by encompassing antitypes. It would also be a pity if readers who resist the notion that writers are absolute authorities on feminine experience should be deflected from reading what is (repeat) an imaginative, funny, and formally very inventive novel.

GAY CLIFFORD.
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Among this week's contributors

G. P. BUTLER is Professor of German at the University of Bath.

BRUCE CHATWIN's *In Patagonia* will be published next year.

LUBOMIR DOLEZEL is Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto.

VICTOR ERLICH's books include *The Double Image*, 1964, and *Gogol*, 1970.

PETER FRANCE is the author of *Rhetoric and Truth in France*, 1972.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE's *The Runaway Church* was published last year.

JULIUS LEWIN is the author of *Politics and Law in South Africa*, 1973.

PATRICK MCCARTHY's *Céline* was published last year.

D. J. MCKITTERICK is an Assistant Under Librarian at the University Library, Cambridge.

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JAN MORRIS's books include *Pax Britannica*, 1968, and *Travels*, 1976.

SARWAT OKASHA was Egyptian Minister of Culture from 1962 to 1971.

ROY PASCAL is the author of *From Naturalism to Expressionism*, 1973, and *Culture and the Division of Labour*, 1974.

J. D. Y. PEEL is Professor of Sociology at the University of Liverpool.

SIR NIKOLAUS PEVSNER's recent books include *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, 1968, and *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*, 1973.

RICHARD SHANNON is the author of *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation, 1876*, 1973, and *The Crisis of Imperialism: a history of Britain 1865-1915*, 1974.

VIRGINIA SPATE is a Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Cambridge.

GEORGE SPEAIGHT is the author of *Punch and Judy*, 1970.

E. S. TURNER's books include *May it Please Your Lordship*, 1971, and *Amazing Grace*, 1975.

EDWARD ULLENDORFF's books include *The Challenge of Amharic*, 1965, and *Ethiopia and the People*, 1968.

T. C. WORSLEY is the author of *Flannelled Fool*, 1967, and *Television: The Ephemeral Art*, 1970.

Piaroa Kinship and Marriage

Sir,—It is a time-dishonoured practice for the writer of a bad book to defend it by attacking its reviewer. Joanna Kaplan's meandering and vehemently *ad hominem* attack on myself (October 1) is perhaps understandable in view of the inadequacies in her work. It should not however be allowed to distract attention from those deficiencies, which must, in the light of her letter, be enumerated once more.

Her ethnography is astoundingly poor. She apparently knew only a couple of Piaroa territories well, for she tells us virtually nothing about the other dozen or so (she does not know how many). She provides no general demographic information about the society as a whole and does not even give a systematic demographic picture of the two territories on which she did focus. We are obliged to guess, since she does not state it, that the total population of the territories from which the bulk of her information comes is about 250 people.

She does not tell us how the Piaroa were affected by the outside world, under the influence of which their culture as she knew it ceased to exist some eight years after she did her field work. She thus deals with Piaroa politics as if they existed in a vacuum. Even so the treatment is inadequate. We are told that the Piaroa were so peaceable that they thought a person guilty of violence against another would die by defecating his own insides. Yet we are not told how disputes were avoided in such a pacific society nor what sorts of disputes did erupt or how they were settled.

When Dr Kaplan turns her attention to the various models of kinship which she claims that the Piaroa use to order their social world, she does not (as she claims in her letter) "provide full data" on the Piaroa use of these classifying systems. She discusses marriage strategies and residential choices in two territories but these data do not support her contention that the Piaroa operate a cognatic system of classification which conflicts with the binary model of their kinship nomenclature. The "evidence" for this is her repeated assertions that the Piaroa see things this way.

Yet she insists in her letter that how the Piaroa really think is unknowable. She makes a distinction between people like myself who presumably seek to know this unknowable and people like herself who "more humbly" provide only observer's models rather than those of the observed. Dr Kaplan's epistemological confusion here shows that she is not even clear about the status of her own analysis. I am aware that the Piaroa do not speak to us directly through her as if she were some sort of medium. Their views come to us interpreted by her and in this sense her rendering of them is an observer's model. But in this sense all anthropological models of other cultures are observers' models. There can be no other kind and therefore there can be no possibility of disagreement between Dr Kaplan and myself. The usual and more useful anthropological distinction between "native models" and "observers' models" recognizes that both are generated by outsiders, but that the former are held to correspond to the native's own model while no such claim is made for the latter. Dr Kaplan's models of the cognatic *chuwaruwang* system and of the Piaroa kinship ideology are *native* models in this sense.

The self-contradictory nature of her analysis is shown by the fact that she insists simultaneously that:

1 It is impossible to know what the Piaroa really think.

2 The Piaroa hold (presumably in their heads) that their society ought to be in some sense a cognatic *chuwaruwang*.

3 This conflicts with their view of society as seen through the binary system of kinship nomenclature.

4 The Piaroa do not really think their society is a cognatic *chuwaruwang*, since this is a polysemic concept whose meaning varies contextually.

When I emphasized the contextuality of *chuwaruwang*, Dr Kaplan took me to task for insinuating that it was my own insight, though I neither thought nor said so. In her polemical zeal she failed to understand what I was saying, which must therefore be restated. The supposed conflict between the *chuwaruwang* model and the system of kinship nomenclature is only there if the piaroa somehow insist on the all-embracing, cognatic meaning of *chuwaruwang*. I doubted this and Dr Kaplan appears to agree with me. Meanwhile the Piaroa theory and practice which informs their binary kinship system is likewise unclear. The postulated "conflict" between the two appears to be as much a product of Dr Kaplan's argument as it is problem for, or in the analysis of, the Piaroa.

There is however no way for the reader to explore these issues since Dr Kaplan provides no comprehensive discussion of Piaroa social theory or of their culture. These lacunae become painfully obvious when she attempts to connect her argument with the theoretical issues treated by writers like Lévi-Strauss, Dumont and Yalman. Their arguments applied to cultures which had been very well described and where a sophisticated analysis could be based on an established preliminary understanding of the ideologies at work. This is unfortunately not the case for the Piaroa.

Dr Kaplan maintains that my critique of her work is motivated by contempt, hostility, elementary incomprehension, ignorance of the latest analyses and more. I can only say that she has been as unsuccessful in conveying my thoughts as she has in conveying those of the Piaroa. It is not necessary to suffer from defects of character or intelligence to conclude that her study of the Piaroa presents an incoherent analysis based on exiguous ethnography.

DAVID MAYBURY-LEWIS.
Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

'The Silbury Treasure'

Sir,—In his *Silbury Treasure* letter (December 10), R. J. C. Atkinson attempts to give the impression that the quotations on page 41 of my book are a paraphrase of his article in *Antiquity*, XLII, 1968, page 299. In fact, as my footnotes to *The Silbury Treasure* clearly show, I used and acknowledged *two* sources.

This oversight on his part can be placed alongside his categorical statement (November 12) that the air photograph on page 129 of my book is printed upside down. Since the print shows a vertical air view, with north orientated towards the top of the page, his criticism is a flight of the purest fancy.

MICHAEL DAMES.
60 Poplar Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7AG.

The New York Public Library

Sir,—Your article on the New York Public Library (November 5) under the heading "The Lions and the Shadows", refers to "a dismal record of civic and national neglect" as contributing to the financial difficulties of that institution.

On the national level at least there has, in fact, been considerable support. The National Endowment for the Humanities has contributed over $6.5 million to the New York Public Library in the period 1972-76. I should add that the Endowment's interest in assisting this library continues.

It does not seem to me that there is anything "dismal" or negligent about this record of national support.

HAROLD C. CANNON.
Division of Research Grants, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington DC 20506.

J. R. VINCENT
Just published
The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-68
2nd edition with 'Afterthoughts', £7.50
HARVESTER PRESS

The epic dimension

By Roy Pascal

RONALD GRAY :

Brecht the Dramatist

232pp. Cambridge University Press. £7.50 (paperback, £2.95).

Ronald Gray puts into this book almost more than it will hold—critical examination of Brecht's dramatic and theatrical theory, of all the plays and notable productions, and even a twenty-page chapter on his influence in Britain and the United States. Besides, Brecht is a slippery customer and enjoyed nothing better than provoking, bluffing, misleading his critics. Dr Gray is not dismayed and remains resolutely critical. He does not allow the concept "epic theatre" to excuse faults of construction, such as he detects even in *Mother Courage and Her Children*; nor is he content to give the general bent of arguments in such plays as *He Who Said Yes*, but examines the text to see how logical or relevant they are. His liberal artistic and political sympathies are made clear, and he finds the highest achievement in the early plays, especially *Baal*, and the late group from *Mother Courage* to *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. But, though he finds communist ideology and policy unsympathetic, he gives enough of the historical-political background to make it understandable why so sceptical and intelligent a man as Brecht should align himself in 1929 with the Communist Party and remain a faithful if uncomfortable supporter. Since Dr Gray has a love of theatre and an alert mind, and is well-informed on the plays and the historical circumstances, his book offers observations, judgments, and critical conclusions that are continuously worth considering.

But his critical ardour asserts itself not infrequently at the expense of imaginative understanding, and he sees faults where there are none, or where it would be more fruitful merely to express a doubt or reserve. He says of *The Exception and the Rule* that, like the other didactic propagandist plays, "its value is open to question, since the conditions it shows are so far removed" from the actual conditions under which his audiences were living. But all these plays have the bare, abstract form of the parable; would Dr Gray discount the New Testament parables on these grounds? On the other hand, the fact that the argument is presented in this simplified form is an important problem that he neglects to discuss, that might well be linked up with that of the structure of Brecht's most successful plays, like *A Man's A Man, The Good Woman of Sezuan* or *The Chalk Circle*, which are all built upon a highly simplified social model, legendary, pre-capitalistic, or artificial. When he discusses *The Measures Taken*, in which he can properly take issue with the decisions of the Agitators, he goes much farther to demonstrate that they act and argue illogically; but Dr Gray's zeal leads him to overlook the main fact that the Young Comrade is condemned not for feeling pity, but for carrying out actions that do not promote revolutionary consciousness and behaviour in the workers. It is good that Dr Gray objects to the loose generalizations and judgments of other critics, but his criticism here fails in insight.

A certain narrowness of sympathy is evident in other places. A generous appreciation of the ambiguities of Galileo's thought and behaviour (in *The Life of Galileo*) is spoilt by niggling remarks aimed at showing that the whole raison d'être of the play is a false hypothesis, since in Dr Gray's view the applications of science are no responsibility of the scientist, who "merely provides the technical or theoretical knowledge". How comfortable an opinion! Strangely, too, he charges Galileo with overestimating the historical significance of his betrayal; as if it were not morally very desirable that a man should acknowledge large responsibilities, even perhaps overvalue the significance of his decisions. Altogether, while in some ways appreciating the complexity of the play and of Galileo's character, sometimes Dr Gray seems to want it all to be simpler and easier; he considers it is "vitiated by the lack of any realistically thought-out content", not realizing that it is the irrationalism and inconsequence in the play that make it so lively and its problem so difficult.

The discussion of *Mother Courage*, though in general faithful to the mighty effect it made in the production of the Berliner Ensemble, also suffers from hypercriticism. At one point Dr Gray tries to prove that it is not "commercial greed" that makes Mother Courage lose her children by the odd argument that they might well have perished from other causes. Sometimes Dr Gray seems to be objecting to what might be expected from the play, rather than what it offers; for instance he *finds* it a fault that the two sons of Mother Courage do not die because of the one's heroism, the other's honesty. Of course, what Brecht shows is that, in the circumstances of this war, courage and honesty are distorted and scarcely recognizable as such. In spite of this, much of what he says about the lack of political, anti-capitalistic point in this play and the "ferocious insistence on the idiocy of destruction", is fully justified. In a somewhat similar sense he appreciates the significance of the fact that in *Puntila* or *The Good Woman* or *The Chalk Circle*, the moral problem is left open, and might not necessarily lead the spectator to a communist solution, as Brecht would have thought.

Throughout Dr Gray's book there are remarks that irritate and tease mixed with many that provoke the reader to take a more critical attitude to Brecht's theory and his plays. For the latter one can be really grateful, for there has been too much unreasoning and uncritical acceptance of his methods and dazzling skills.

One last comment: for this book, the type used by the American printers has no symbol for the German "sz", and uses in its place a "tz", with the most irritating results—yet it is published by the Cambridge University Press.

Leading ladies

By George Speaight

RICHARD FINDLATER :

The Player Queens

250pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £6.95.

TOM PRIDEAUX :

Love or Nothing

The Life and Times of Ellen Terry

288pp. Millington. £5.50.

The introduction and the rise of the actress in the European theatre has been a sociological as well as a theatrical phenomenon. Until this century a career on the stage offered a woman one of the very few opportunities open to her to acquire money, power and independence in her own right. At one time regarded as not much better than prostitutes and drawn largely from theatrical families, by the early twentieth century actresses came flocking from vicarages and middle-class homes; today they come from the households of cabinet ministers, and lead demonstrations in Trafalgar Square.

Richard Findlater has complemented his earlier book about great actors with a study of actresses, *The Player Queens*. He discusses Mrs Betterton, Nell Gwynn, Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle from the seventeenth century; Anne Oldfield, Kitty Clive, Mrs Pritchard, Susannah Cibber and Peg Woffington from the eighteenth century; Mrs Siddons from the turn of the century; Helena Faucit, Madame Vestris, Marie Wilton and Madge Kendal, very briefly, from the Victorians; Ellen Terry at greater length; Janet Achurch and Mrs Patrick Campbell from the Edwardians; and Sybil Thorndike, Edith Evans and Peggy Ashcroft from the twentieth century.

It is notoriously difficult to describe a theatrical experience in adequate words, but Richard Findlater has read widely in the contemporary accounts and in recent studies and quotes with discretion. He finds, too, telling phrases of his own to sum up the character of his subjects: Nell Gwynn, "the chestnut-haired trollop . . . with the broad, engulfing, sexy grin that was one of her trademarks"; Elizabeth Barry, who "brought on the stage a magnetic field of intense sexuality, could unleash electrifying anger"; Mrs Bracegirdle, who "reigned as a Virgin Queen who enjoyed a dirty joke"; Sybil Thorndike, "with her clear blue eyes, broad forehead, determined chin, her voice throbbing and swooping through clusters of clauses, her conspicuously golden heart and her utter lack of affectation".

The difficulty of finding words to describe the art of acting can, to some extent, be overcome by juxtaposing pictures with the printed text, and there is no lack of theatrical iconography available. But in this respect the publisher, with eight pages of unimaginatively captioned illustrations, has given the author little support. The portrait of Peg Woffington is apparently reproduced from the original in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and should have been so acknowledged.

Some actresses, like Nell Gwynn, are more famous for their private lives than for their stage performances. Some, like Mrs Siddons, are more famous for their stage performances than for their private lives. Ellen Terry is equally renowned for both. She provides one of the most interesting chapters in Richard Findlater's book, and the latest writer to fall under her spell is an American, Tom Prideaux, who has written about the theatre in *Life* magazine for the past thirty years, "pursuing the avant garde", and has now produced a readable story of the life of this fascinating woman, *Love or Nothing*.

Curiously, when so many actresses of the past seem cardboard figures today, the charm of Ellen Terry comes vividly alive to modern readers. The comments of her friends and her own recorded words and spontaneous letters conjure up the personality that enchanted her contemporaries. And then there is the enigma of the failure of three marriages, the idyll in Hertfordshire, the partnership with Irving, the correspondence with Shaw, the rearing of her two gifted children. It is probably true to say that Ellen was not a great actress; she was rather a wonderful human being whose personality warmed the hearts of her audience and shines even through her portraits and photographs to us today.

There is not a great deal that is new in Mr Prideaux's book—Roger Manvell's remains the standard biography. He produces no answers for those who want to know whether Ellen's marriage with Watts was ever consummated, or whether she and Irving were lovers—as if it matters. He follows the errors of earlier writers in some respects—Godwin, for instance, had far less to do with Bancroft's production of *The Merchant of Venice* than he is credited with. But for those who come to Ellen Terry for the first time, his book will swell still more the legions of her admirers. Thirty-seven well-chosen illustrations—though poorly reproduced by the "dot for dot" process of photolithography from the American edition—effectively complement the text.

Sehr bürgerlich

By G. P. Butler

TANKRED DORST :

Dorothea Merz

249pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM 20.

Tankred Dorst is a man of the theatre and probably best known in Britain as co-author of the revue *Little Man—What Now?* (based on Fallada's bestseller). He has adapted Dekker and Diderot, translated Molière and O'Casey, and resuscitated Ernst Toller; and he has now apparently begun—in collaboration with Ursula Ehler—to tell something of his own story.

Dorothea Merz, a novel of sorts which has already been retailed as television, is part of a large-scale attempt to sketch—as the publisher puts it—"the panorama of a middle-class [*bürgerlich*] family in Germany from the twenties to the present day". In terms of narrated time it is the first part, and it covers only one summer's day in 1935. The finale—an inconclusive and sombre comedy called *Auf dem Chimborazo* which was staged, panned and published last year—takes place one summer evening in about 1970. There are said to be several kindred texts to come which should help fill in the gap.

Those who know what a domineering and [illegible] old [illegible] Merz becomes [illegible] "Chimborazo" [illegible] one of her sons [illegible] the play's hilltop setting [illegible] East German [illegible] will welcome [illegible] the past is amply peopled.

It is 1925. Dorothea and Rudolf, an educated young man who runs his family's factory in the country, have just married. She is glad to exchange the snobbery and materialism of her urban background (Ruhr) for the simplicity of village life (evidently Thuringia, Dora's home district); he appears content: an undemonstrative but amiable husband with a somewhat schoolmasterly affection for his naive and impulsive little wife. Their favourite book is *Walden*; they read Keller together; neither of them is known to have read Fontane. The idyllicism soon fades; Rudolf contracts tuberculosis—it runs in the family—and dies a couple of years later, leaving Dorothea with a gammy-legged boy, Tilman (born 1926), and very little else; their younger child, Heinrich (born 1928), seems to be developing emotional problems; and the ill-placed widow finds herself largely dependent on her husband's scheming brother, Erich.

However, her self-assurance and occasional assertiveness to date, and her fitful impatience even with the ailing Rudolf ("as she ran she kept on thinking: I want to be free, I'm still so young, he should let me alone with all his dying"), suggest she has the spirit to survive; and she is not foolhardy: distasteful though she may find them, she is unlikely to court the hostility of the political monsters which, by the time this part of her story ends, are just getting into their stride—after all, "politics is men's business".

The promised panorama has begun to unfold, and [illegible] family [illegible] sequence of [illegible] snapshots: technically [illegible] unremarkable style, to [illegible] Dorst is "something secondary") but highly evocative, rich in types and perhaps in characters—it is hard to judge as yet; *Dorothea Merz* and the works with which it is linked—discrete units, so their author says—must be seen in relation to the whole they eventually constitute. We may be in for a long wait.

Michael Patterson's *German Theatre Today* (129pp. Pitman, £3.50; paperback, £1.95) is a vivid survey of post-war theatre in West and East Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The director's hand

By T. C. Worsley

MICHAEL MULLIN (Editor) :

Macbeth on Stage

An annotated Facsimile of Glen Byam Shaw's 1955 Promptbook

256pp. University of Missouri Press. $26.

Another damned, thick, square book! Scribble, scribble, scribble, eh? The quotation rises unavoidably in the mind. For *Macbeth on Stage* is a damned thick, all but square, book consisting mostly of scribbles. They are the pencil scribbles by which the director, Glen Byam Shaw, plotted his 1955 production of Macbeth at Stratford-on-Avon with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. It was his custom to stick on each right-hand page of a large notebook the small pages of the New Temple Shakespeare and map out from these the scenes as he conceived them.

Although a friend and colleague of Michel St Denis, he did not belong to the improvisatory school of directors; he came to rehearsal with a fixed plan of the action and characterization of all the secondary personages (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth alone were excepted); and an actor had to be very tough and convincing to change his mind for him. But most actors, as some of them tell us in an epilogue, found themselves agreeing with his blueprint, and were helped by its decisiveness and reasoned good sense.

The right-hand page is used for notes on the action such as the text suggests; the left-hand page is for mapping in the positioning with scribbled drawings, and for comments and additions of all kinds. Many of Angus McBean's fine photographs are incorporated in the text which is rounded out with a foreword and an afterword from the editor, Michael Mullin.

In his introduction the editor reminds us of the value of "prompt-copies" of which various libraries contain many. Scholars, students and fledgling directors have been able to learn much of interest about the staging of the plays at different times. But these prompt-copies are records of [illegible] a play was [illegible] staged; they record the fait accompli.

This one, he seems to imply, is specially valuable in that it records not exactly how this 1955 Macbeth was done (though the record of that is available) but how its director shaped it in his imagination before the rehearsals even started. It is, in short, not the stage manager's final record, it is the director's prompt-book preliminary to the event.

I remember the production well, and this because Olivier is the only actor who has reconciled me to what I regard as a flawed play. But so dazzling was Olivier that he stilled all criticism; and I intended to pay Glen Byam Shaw's direction the highest compliment when I gave as my general impression that wherever possible he cleared the stage and let Olivier carry the play almost by voice alone. Not only each syllable but each labial, dental and sibilant were used to create an astonishingly rich and varied performance.

It pleases me therefore to find the editor (who presumably did not attend a performance) deduce in his afterword that this in essence was just what Byam Shaw intended, more and more isolating Olivier downstage with the other actors in the scene grouped well upstage.

But this prompt-copy reminds one that however overpowering the recollection of Olivier, he was, unlike poor sad Donald Wolfit, supported by an excellent cast and by a management of the effects and events which may have been conventional in style but was, so to speak, at the height of this particular class.

Michael Mullin has made a good, sensible, easily digestible book based on this director's prompt-copy. But one must, in all honesty, say that only a transatlantic university press with money to spare could indulge in such a luxury. It is for its limited audience interesting, but hardly indispensable.

Volume 45 of *Plays of the Year* (309pp. Elek. £5.95), edited by J. C. Trewin, contains two modern plays, Julian Mitchell's *A Family and a Fortune*, from the novel by Ivy Compton-Burnett, and Kerry Lee Crabbe's *The Last Romantic*; and also Turgenev's *A Month in the Country* (translated by Ariadne Nicolaeff), revived in November 1975.

An empire against imperialism

By Edward Ullendorff

SVEN RUBENSON :

The Survival of Ethiopian Independence

437pp. Heinemann, in association with Esselte Studium and Addis Ababa University Press. £15.

The past two or three years have seen a great deal of meretricious writing on the subject of Ethiopia, a desire to produce instant history and to cash in on the revolutionary fashion in Africa which had finally caught up even with the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia, and—last but not least—to administer the *coup de grâce*, by fair means or foul, to the once great reputation of a remarkable emperor. Such treatment had long been expected of the ideologically committed and the carefully indoctrinated, but that the Western media should have joined in the cowardly chase with such cheerful alacrity and profound ignorance came as a severe jolt to one's sense of justice and to the survival of civilized standards.

Sven Rubenson's study of nineteenth-century Ethiopia is mercifully free from all the turgid jargon and jejune sloganizing of which this kind of literature is so frequently redolent. With the present book the professor of history in the University of Addis Ababa, who had hitherto produced only two monographs, modest in size and significance, has entered the field with a major contribution which eclipses much that has been written on the subject—with the exception of Zewde Gabra-Sellassie's *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia* and Richard Pankhurst's *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800-1935* (both mentioned by Professor Rubenson, but perhaps insufficiently worked into the fabric of his narrative).

The book is attractively produced, well written, and happily eschews the type of anachronistic animadversions, currently in vogue, which reprove nineteenth-century Ethiopian monarchs for deficiencies in their social conscience and failure to live up to Marxist-Leninist expectations. Professor Rubenson displays a fine command of European and Ethiopian sources (his introductory survey of sources is of the greatest value), and in the exploitation of the latter he is equalled only by Dr Zewde. His acquaintance with Amharic is an immense asset, one that is possessed by very few historians of Ethiopia, and invests his story with an authority and weight that make it a pleasure to handle this book.

The importance of his Amharic documentation can scarcely be overstated, and it would have been splendid had it been possible to publish facsimiles of all the Ethiopic documents in an appendix. The four which the author does adduce are truly fascinating in their linguistic and historical implications. Ras Walda Sellassie's letter, written in "classical" Ethiopic (Ge'ez), to King George III, would have merited integral translation rather than mere paraphrase. Dejazmatch Sebagadis's missive to King George IV is an extraordinary document and should engage the attention of Amharic and Tigrinya scholars. It is very rare for Professor Rubenson to misconstrue the purport of an Amharic phrase, but he does so on page 222.

With this fine command of the sources, it is a pity that so self-effacing a scholar should have painted the pre-Rubenson darkness in such lurid colours. It is simply not correct to assert that scholars have not considered the Amharic originals of treaties, letters, etc, and have failed to compare them with the "official" translations. Of course, not enough has been done but, with one single exception, none of the dozens of studies of this nature, now in front of the reviewer as he writes, appear to be known to Professor Rubenson. They are certainly not listed in his bibliography. In two places in his book the author discusses the 1872 letters sent by Emperor Yohannes IV to Queen Victoria and Lord Granville and vents his wrath on those who have failed to check the English version against the Amharic original. But a detailed study of the texts of these letters was published in 1969 in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.

The same is true of other nineteenth-century letters and treaties, and it is very odd that nearly all of them should have eluded Professor Rubenson's keen bibliographical eye—including Abraham Demoz's splendid work on Emperor Menelik's phonograph message to Queen Victoria, a primary source if ever there was one, with its poignant echoes of his predecessor, Emperor Yohannes, and of the blood shed at Metemma (a place that rightly looms large in Professor Rubenson's story). Further nineteenth-century original material has since been published, such as the valuable biography of Ras Alula, the great champion of Eritrean independence from Italian encroachment, or is now in the process of being consigned to the press, such as all the original Amharic letters of Emperor Theodore relating to the Napier expedition (preserved in the India Office Library and the Public Record Office).

In his treatment of Sir Gerald Portal's mission to Yohannes, Professor Rubenson misses both the far-reaching errors in Portal's understanding of the Amharic letters sent to him as well as the article where those mistakes have been discussed. We now know a little more about the Ethiopian historian Aleqa Tayye, and the autobiography of Emperor Haile Sellassie (an annotated English translation was published by the Oxford University Press a few months ago) also has some illuminating observations on the closing years of the nineteenth century.

I realize, of course, that Professor Rubenson intends his story to end in 1875-76, but in fact he takes us up to the treaty of Wichale (Ucciali) and the events of Adwa, both of which are treated in some detail. The discrepancies between the Amharic and Italian versions of that treaty were well known also in the tenebrous days before the Rubenson/Giglio controversy.

This takes me to the one indecorous aspect of Professor Rubenson's fine work: a tendency to underestimate the work of his predecessors, notably Italian scholars, and to extol the virtues of his immediate colleagues, excellent though they are, a trifle too much. It seems, perhaps, a little incongruous that Dr Caulk and Dr Crummey should have many entries in the index, while the two greatest names in Ethiopian studies, Carlo Conti Rossini and Enrico Cerulli, should rate one and none, respectively.

Pearce's knowledge of Tigrinya and Amharic has been investigated by earlier scholars. The section "Eritrea conceived" is not quite clear to me in its import, for the indigenous designations *marāb mällash* (beyond the river Mareb) or *bahr nägash* (ruler of the sea province) clearly implied the notion of Eritrea. The Amharic characters—and indeed the book as a whole—are beautifully printed, with a commendable absence of typographical mistakes. I have noticed only one Amharic printing error (page 155). Though I have seen many fine photographs of Dabra Bizen, Eritrea's premier monastery, none is as beautiful or as poignantly evocative of that stark ascent as the one printed here.

The transliteration adopted by Professor Rubenson and his colleagues is highly disturbing, as it reflects graphic patterns rather than pronunciation. It conveys an air of accuracy it does not possess. There exist no acceptable modes of transcription other than a rigorous scientific one or a popular, rough-and-ready approximation. What is the point of disguising the well-known Shoa, Gondar, Zula, Wollo, etc, as Shewa, Gonder, Zulla, Wello? Fortunately Massawa has escaped Professor Rubenson's transliterating ardour, for otherwise it would have had to masquerade as Mitsiwa in his system.

There are two further, more general points to which I would like to refer. Professor Rubenson publishes the facsimile text of the 1843 Franco-Shoan treaty, either initialled or concluded by Rochet d'Héricourt. The discussion does not take fully into account that until Haile Sellassie Ethiopian monarchs did not append their signatures to instruments of state but used their seals or chief scribes. Yet, by an extraordinary logical leap, Professor Rubenson reaches the "inescapable conclusion" that the treaty of 1843 was a fraud perpetrated by Rochet. Yet the Ethiopian hand and text are plainly authentic and were recognized as such by the Ethiopian writer and Foreign Minister Blattengeta Heruy in his unpublished "History of Ethiopia". I find it worrying that Professor Rubenson should be so quick to ascribe base motives to Europeans. A greater display of even-handed justice would have further enhanced the value of this book.

Not wholly unconnected with this point is my second observation: Professor Rubenson avers that European historians will inevitably "fall into the trap of writing European history instead of Ethiopian as soon as Europeans are involved". The "Euro-centred approach" and "racial prejudice", to which he repeatedly refers, are not easy to detect in the best and most scholarly writers (with the exception of Luca del Sabelli, who is in any event never mentioned in this book). Could it be that, quite uncharacteristically, Professor Rubenson is here paying lip-service to a tendency and a prejudice in which he does not really believe?

All these and other aspects not referred to here are minor blemishes, occasional irritants, in a massive achievement that may have as durable qualities of survival as the Ethiopian independence to which Professor Rubenson alludes in the title of his book.

Inquest on Nkrumah

By J. D. Fage

TREVOR JONES :

Ghana's First Republic 1960-1966

366pp. Methuen. £6.50 (paperback, £3.95).

Anyone who was in the old Gold Coast in 1957 or in the new Ghana then and immediately afterwards will remember the high hopes with which this territory entered upon independence. The Gold Coast had been the model colony, in which the lessons of Western progress had been successfully absorbed into a stable African society. Africans and Britons alike had agreed that the crisis of 1948 was the consequence of the inept and inert British policies of the day, and not evidence of instability in the African society or of immaturity in its politics. The cocoa farmers had pioneered a truly indigenous economic revolution, thus providing the wealth to make Ghana better equipped, in education and other services, than other African colonies for independent nationhood. In Kwame Nkrumah, a political leader had appeared with a truly exceptional ability to command the trust and support (and often the affection also) at once of the majority of Ghanaians and of the expatriates—entrepreneurs as well as colonial officials—who held the commanding heights of the political and economic system he was to take over. In 1960, both Nkrumah's achievement and Ghana's independence seemed to be consolidated by the introduction of a new republican constitution.

But within six years, Nkrumah and his republic had gone. Ghana's resources and Nkrumah's political inheritance had alike been squandered. Foreign reserves of nearly £200 million had been turned by reckless and uncontrolled spending into a foreign debt which no one seemed able to calculate exactly, but which was generally supposed to amount to some £350 million. Parliamentary democracy had been perverted, and other, possibly more significant, British legacies, the independent judiciary and the professional civil service, had been outflanked. But this had been done as much by rhetoric as by setting up alternative systems. If Ghana's affairs were directed at all, it was by a palace government of shifting coteries—erratic, open to corruption, and often contradictory and ineffective. This government was too inchoate to be really evil or cruel, except almost by inadvertence, and it was not so much intolerant of criticism or opposition as tolerant only of sycophancy. But the result was that virtually the whole body politic had become diseased and ineffectual—whether for or against Osagyefo, the "Redeemer" at the centre of the infection. Ultimately the army was the only part of the nation capable of effective independent action. When a group of its officers saw the infection creeping upon their defences, they struck. Overnight the empty shell of Nkrumah's republic was overturned; and the soldiers were acclaimed as public heroes.

Trevor Jones has provided a wholly admirable account of what went wrong in Ghana between 1960 and 1966, and he can usually also explain in considerable and convincing detail exactly *how* it went wrong. He has also produced an eminently readable book, which "reads like a thriller"—except that few thrillers are written with his sense of style. It may be doubted whether a better overview of the history of Ghana in these years will be written for a very long time. It is probably a more apparent than a real disadvantage that Mr Jones has only been able to call on published sources. A very considerable inquest on Nkrumah's republic was held by the successor regimes in numerous public enquiries, and Mr Jones seems to have thoroughly digested virtually everything of value that was available to him. Moreover he has been able to assess this material from a peculiarly advantageous position. He was in Ghana at the time of the events he narrates, but as an expatriate lecturer in history at its premier university. He was thus in the society and events he has written about, but he was not himself involved in them; they were material for his professional skills. It may also be that when the official records of what happened in Ghana between 1960 and 1966 are open to historians, in the nature of the case they will be found to provide more of a series of inside comments than a coherent inside story.

In default of some equivalent of the White House tapes, the story of *why* things went so wrong in Nkrumah's last years of office may never be unequivocably established. If decisions, and the discussions that led to them and the consequences that flowed from them, had been properly recorded at the time, his regime (if that is not too positive a term) might have been less chaotic and more lasting. We are still left with the obvious hypotheses. For example, during 1950-57 the British gave way too easily before the magic of Nkrumah's personality and the logic of the situation he was so ably exploiting. Therefore, instead of providing him with an acceptably "African" democracy (which is what the pre-1950 policy of "Indirect Rule" might have been supposed to engender), or a properly rooted "Westminster" democracy (for which there was not enough time), they simply transferred to him the autocratic tradition and powers of a colonial regime. The obverse of this is that in these early years, underpinned by British acquiescence and support, Nkrumah was too successful. Having persuaded the majority of Ghanaians (though never all of them) that he was the Redeemer, by 1960 he had come to convince himself that he really could walk on the waters. Having so easily demonstrated the primacy of his "Political Kingdom" within Ghana, his own country simply became a tool for the support of his messianic leadership throughout the African continent. But here Nkrumah met tougher, more realistic rivals, unwilling to believe that either he or his Ghana had any divine right to lead. In pursuit of his impossible dream, Nkrumah neglected Ghana's interests; increasingly her resources were either wasted or they became exploited by Ghanaian place-seekers and equally unscrupulous foreigners climbing aboard his bandwagon, so that eventually the prophet lost all honour in his own country.

Nkrumah may indeed have distorted Ghana's history for many, many years. The soldiers who overthrew him did the idealistic thing, and restored civil government. But this in practice meant transferring power to lesser and less idealistic politicians, who in any case were totally incapable of mobilizing action to take Ghana out of the web of debt woven in Nkrumah's time. So the soldiers felt that they had to come back again, and this time stay longer. Thus they have opened themselves to the problem that if it is legitimate for one lot of soldiers to seize power, it is not easy to see why it should be illegitimate for any other lot to seize it from them. Their solution must be to claim that they are the legitimate heirs of the original Redeemer. But their starting-point is not as favourable as his was.

Custom-built

By Julius Lewin

SEBASTIAN POULTER :

Family Law and Litigation in Basotho Society

361pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.

The colonial system left British Africa a continuing legacy which few lawyers and fewer laymen have studied. This is the conflict between tribal custom and common law, especially in the field of family law. Sebastian Poulter, who is a law lecturer at Southampton University, had a good opportunity to consider the thorny problems involved because Lesotho is unique in Africa in having a homogeneous population. Consequently there is no internal conflict of tribal laws to complicate further a complex situation. Unfortunately, however, in spite of his industry Mr Poulter has missed the opportunity to clarify the central issues which beset the courts. This may be due to cloudiness about the purpose of the research. The author says he did not set out to record or restate Sotho customary law. He aimed only "to provide more detailed information than has hitherto been available" about the way courts apply the law. Yet he also offers his book as a contribution to comparative law, a broader aim which is not fulfilled.

To begin with, the author refers the reader to an earlier book published in Charlottesville in 1972, *The Legal System of Lesotho*, in which he collaborated with another writer. Presumably this work provided the essential framework so summarily sketched in the introduction to this volume.

However, it remains doubtful if the author fully appreciates the importance of the primary questions involved in recognizing changing tribal customs as a source of law. He declares that "customary law depends for its vitality to a large extent on the practices of the people who are subject to it; as these develop so does the law". Surely this mysterious process of development requires more light to be shed on it. For example, in the practice of *bohali* or payment made by a bridegroom to the father of the bride—a subject dealt with in three chapters—there *is* a conflict of interest (and of generations) between the parties. Each will tend to stretch the supposed custom in his own favour. (Incidentally, it is sad to read that amid so much poverty the usual marriage payment amounts to as much as £260; or more in terms of cattle.) To confer validity on *changing* customs is peculiarly difficult.

Moreover, the author is rightly worried about the old "repugnancy" rule which forbids judges to recognize such customs as are repugnant to the British sense of justice and morality. The higher courts can still apply this rule but the lower courts do not and few cases reach the highest courts. In 1968 the Lord Chief Justice of England took a step forward when he held that "decent-minded Englishmen or women" must tolerantly remember that marriage customs offensive to them are acceptable in West Africa. The marriage of a girl aged thirteen was thus recognized in England. It is clear that in theory if not in practice the repugnancy rule produces a degree of legal uncertainty which is perhaps part of the fascination that law shares with cricket, but it is nevertheless unfortunate. That some litigants are Christians who get married in church and so under the common law makes for more confusion, as does the fact that in Lesotho the common law is not English but South African or Roman-Dutch.

The collection of the corpus

By David McKitterick

EDMUND SPENSER:
The Faerie Queene 1596
Volume 1: 595pp.
Volume 2: 363pp.
Introduction by Graham Hough
£40 the set.

The Workes of Benjamin Jonson
Introduction by D. Heyward Brock
1,015pp. £45.
Scolar Press.

Neither the *Faerie Queene* nor the 1616 folio *Workes* of Jonson is a rare book, if the standards of rarity which we are accustomed to apply to early English books are invoked, but equally neither is as well known generally as it should be. It is a remarkable, and to some a distressing, fact that despite the close attention which both Spenser and Jonson displayed as their respective books went through the press, only modest interest (apart from antiquarian curiosity) is liable to be shown in the original form in which two of the most important books in the history of English literature first appeared. The Scolar Press, in publishing these for an audience without easy access to the rare book collections of libraries, and indeed for libraries anxious to avoid unnecessary handling of increasingly worn originals, has advanced far since it first issued the 1607 *Volpone* and the 1579 *Shepheardes calender* in paperback, and if most students (and even those with slightly longer purses) will feel unable to buy these more expensive volumes, that is, sadly, inevitable.

Spenser had written much of the *Faerie Queene* by 1580, when he sent it to Gabriel Harvey asking for his criticisms. Harvey did not apparently reply in detail, but instead teased Spenser for his fanciful imagination. Whether as a result of this (which seems unlikely) or simply because Spenser himself did not consider his major work fit for the press, nothing appeared for ten years, until William Ponsonby published the first three books in 1590, the same year that he published the first edition of Sidney's *Arcadia*. Ponsonby was one of the best connected publishers in London. Two more editions of the *Arcadia* appeared over his name in the 1590s; in 1591 he published Abraham Fraunce's *Countesse of Pembrokes Emanuel* and *Yuychurch*; two translations by the Countess of Pembroke herself, of Philippe de Mornay and Robert Garnier, appeared in 1592 and 1595, and in the latter year he also issued Guicciardini, Machiavelli's *Florentine historie*, Sir Hugh Platt, and Sidney's *Defence of poesie*. Almost all Spenser's works which appeared in his lifetime, apart from the *Shepheardes calendar*, came from his house, a list which included the *Complaints*, 1591, the *Amoretti and epithalamion* and *Colin Clouts come home againe*, both 1595, and *Fowre hymnes* and the *Prothalamion*, both 1596. Ponsonby was no ordinary publisher, nor can he have been unaware of Spenser's progress in his projected "twelve books, fashioning XII morall vertues": his disingenuous preface to the *Complaints*, published only a short while after the first appearance of the *Faerie Queene* presents him as a public benefactor gathering in dispersed "small poemes", whereas it seems almost certain that the book was in fact the result of close collaboration between Spenser and his publisher.

Encouraged by the success of the first three books of the *Faerie Queene* in 1590, Spenser laboured on, and in 1596 Ponsonby published six books, the first three in a page for page resetting of the 1590 edition and the second three for the first time. In the intervening years Spenser had made several revisions to his earlier text, including, most notably, a new ending to Book 3, and it is generally accepted that Richard Field, Ponsonby's printer, used a marked copy of the 1590 edition coupled with Spenser's holograph of Books 4-6. Spenser revised to the end, even when the book was partly in type.

But the 1596 edition is neither completely self-contained, nor is it, possibly, Spenser's final version. In it he omitted the fascinating "letter of the Authors expounding his whole intention in the course of this worke", addressed to Ralegh. By then Ralegh had been discredited, and it would scarcely have been prudent to repeat it in a work dedicated to, and in celebration of, the queen. Nor (except for three) were the seven commendatory verses and Spenser's own seventeen sonnets appended to the 1590 edition, reprinted. (The Scolar Press facsimile reprints the letter to Ralegh in an appendix, but not the additional poems from the 1590 edition.) The *Faerie Queene* was a poem about Gloriana, Elizabeth herself. In 1590 Spenser had overcome the difficulty of dedicating his work to the queen while still acknowledging the patronage of Ralegh and vaunting the esteem in which others held him, by placing his exposition and the verses at the end rather than at the beginning. By 1596 they had shrunk to two sonnets by W. R. and the stanzas by Hobynoll.

Spenser never completed his scheme, and died in 1599, but he left behind a further fragment, the *Mutability Cantos*, which were added to the text of the *Faerie Queene* in the folio edition of 1609, possibly edited by Gabriel Harvey. These are reprinted in the present facsimile, and it is amusing to remark that the head-pieces to the 1609 edition still proudly proclaim ER; in 1596 James VI of Scotland had taken affront at the poem, part of which he resented as an attack on his mother.

Graham Hough's lucid introduction to the history of the text provides also, importantly, a reminder of the continuous respect it has enjoyed since. Despite this, the poem has rarely been printed in as spacious a manner as it was in the 1590s. Perhaps the introduction should also have mentioned a little more on the printing of the book; in 1965 Frank B. Evans identified at least three, and probably four, compositors, and it can only be a matter of time before the poem is re-edited. Then, perhaps, we shall add to our knowledge of how great an interest Spenser took in the progress of his work through the press; it is an aspect of literary activity about which, so far, disappointingly little has been written, and both Spenser and Jonson may offer more evidence than is at present realized.

Ben Jonson's collected *Workes* of 1616 (reproduced here from the Douce copy and prefaced by a historical introduction by D. Heyward Brock) prompts, immediately and inevitably, comparisons with the First Folio of 1623, and, later, the Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1647. The comparison is illuminating, but it can also be distracting. The Shakespeare and the Jonson were produced under very different circumstances, one some time after the author's death, long after the plays were first performed and as an act of piety by his colleagues, the other when the author was still very much alive. Jonson was forty years old in 1616. But not only were the circumstances different. The contrast in typography, the disposition of the text on the page, is dramatic in more senses than one. Shakespeare was printed in double columns without any lateral breaks except between plays, the type mean and carelessly set, and in places so tight that verse is cramped into prose. Its exemplar in format, if not in typography, was nearly everything that the First Folio was not, and to emphasize the contrast between the two does justice to neither.

As is well known, Jonson was ribbed on more than one occasion for daring to put forth his collected works even before he could have been called middle-aged. "What others call a play you call a worke", ran part of a contemporary epigram, and in 1633 Thomas Heywood commented, "True it is, that my Playes are not exposed unto the world in Volumes, to beware the title of Workes (as others)." The barbs of Jonson's fellow writers were provoked as much by his vanity ("He is a great lover and praiser of himself, a contemner and Scorner of others", wrote William Drummond in 1619) as by any serious consideration of the contents of the folio, which contained much beside plays, and it is still easy to forget this.

Nevertheless he set a precedent, not in choosing to publish current imaginative literature with such grandiloquence: the format, for other than drama, was common enough, and both Drayton's *Polyolbion* (1612) and Samuel Purchas's *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1613) had appeared shortly before, perhaps even as the Jonson was going through the press. But no one before had published their own plays in folio, a format more commonly (despite Drayton and Purchas) employed for history, the classics, or serious scholarship. William Hole's great engraved title-page, with its triumphal arch, its classically dressed figures of Tragoedia and Comoedia, and above them the less formal Satyr and Pastor, was of a type hitherto unknown for works of this nature, and no reader can have failed to notice it. Hole was one of the most experienced engravers of this sort of work practising in London at the time, and had executed title-pages for Chapman's Homer, Hooker's *Of the lawes of ecclesiasticall politie*, Ralegh's *History of the World*, and Seneca's *Workes* in the previous few years, the last three all for William Stansby, Jonson's publisher. Inside, too, the similarity to more serious literature could hardly be missed, the text set in single columns in English type, the names of the characters in capitals, each play opening with a large decorative initial. The scale, in detail as well as in concept, bore an uncomfortable resemblance to editions of classical authors, printed not in England but abroad, such as the Lambinus edition of Plautus published in Paris in 1577.

Not all of Jonson's works were of course included. Two early plays, *The Case is Altered* and *Eastward Ho*, of which Jonson wrote only part, escaped, probably because Jonson did not wish to preserve them. *Bartholomew Fair*, acted in October 1614, two years before the book was finally published, was an odder omission. *The Staple of Newes* and *The New Inn*, among others, were still to be written, and *The Devil is an Ass* was performed in 1616, the same year as the *Workes* appeared.

Various reasons were put forward then, and others have been since, for Jonson's decision to publish in 1616 in this form, and to gather together the corpus of his work by which he wished posterity to judge him. It seems clear that he revised and even corrected the text himself, and Greg pointed the difficulties inherent in such editing in 1949; Herford and Simpson had recognized them before that. Compared with the enormous labours expended on the First Folio Jonson has been (almost) neglected. This is the first facsimile of the *Workes* to be published since the remarkable type facsimile issued by W. Bang in 1905-08, and if as a result more notice is paid to the textual problems which abound, and to the equally instructive format, design, and history of the book's conception, we will owe yet another debt to the Scolar Press for issuing this admirable and fascinating facsimile.

Picture parade

By John Collins

JOHN LANDWEHR:
Studies in Dutch Books with Coloured Plates Published 1662-1875
605pp. The Hague: Junk. Fl 300.

This is a useful and interesting book, handsomely presented, but it suffers from terminological inexactitudes which almost prove fatal. It consists of a series of preliminary essays on such subjects as "Colouring: Quality, Cost Price and Delivery Time" or "Bookprices in the Eighteenth Century". These are followed by two bibliographies (natural history and the rest) arranged alphabetically by authors. So far so good; indeed, some of the titles of the essays sound very interesting. However, as one begins to read, dissatisfaction sets in, and the muddle, and a number of serious errors, irritate one more and more.

To take the bibliographies first; although the standard of treatment varies considerably, nowhere is there any description of the author's bibliographical methods. Some entries give a complete list of all the plates, others give only the number and (to some extent) the kind. It is never clear whether Landwehr is describing a plate or transcribing the caption (or a mixture of both). Thus any bibliographical evidence of variant states, such as the Abbey catalogues provide, is completely lost.

In some cases the plate lists are rearranged in alphabetical order of subjects, thus making even simple collation almost impossibly laborious (many of these lists seem to have been copied without acknowledgment from the indexes of the works concerned). This will annoy bibliographers without much helping anyone else.

The author's use of his predecessors is careless. The first two entries in his bibliography exemplify this. Of the first he remarks: "The address on some of the plates *A. L. Wirsung exc. Nor.* suggests a translation from a German edition. It is one of the best executed publications of Christinan Sepp." Since Sepp is one of his heroes he should investigate further. A quick look in Dryander shows that the German edition comprised only the first portion, and Sepp presumably added the rest; and Dryander suggests the British Museum Catalogue and the British Museum (Natural History) Catalogue, both of which ascribe the whole work to Wirsung. The second entry in his bibliography is also anonymous, but a look in Nissen would have given the author, or compiler: it is Johannes Zorn.

The essays, although with unusual titbits in them, turn out to be an unsatisfactory ragbag. Some very interesting material about the illustrations for Temminck's *Verhandelingen over de Natuurlijke Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche overzeesche bezittingen*, 1839-44, is quoted. This comes from the archives of the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Hostorie, Leiden, and provides nice solid detail about the nuts and bolts of commercial colouring.

The author invests most of the earlier practitioners with the unfortunate name of "hobby" colourists, and he puts as late as the mid-eighteenth century the period in which "hobbyism changed into professionalism". It is impossible to believe that the great majority of colour-plate books before this (as after) were not produced commercially. The author's rather cavalier attitude to the economics of the book trade is evident elsewhere; for example, he deduces that "Buffa & Zonen published occasionally, i e, they published purely for their pleasure". He seems to have been so seduced by the beauty of his subject that he can hardly believe that most of these delicious books were produced, bought and sold in the ordinary way of trade.

The author has clearly enjoyed his work and he communicates a good deal of his pleasure. However, there are already many bibliographies which cover parts of the same field, so that the arrival of yet another book which must be consulted, but cannot be relied on, is a mixed blessing.

Printing for its own sake

By Jenny Stratford

The best way to damp paper, the quirks of Albion presses, rolling-presses, and the Adana 8 by 5 platen, a first composing-stick of bent copper wire, how to tell when Blake was printing on a platen or a rolling-press. . . . These were a few of the technicalities discussed at the opening of the exhibition "Private Presses" (at Swiss Cottage Library until January 12)—an [illegible] and original contribution to the Caxton centenary devised by Deborah Lambert of Camden's arts department.

The work of no less than twenty-eight contemporary English presses is on show. Unlike the current single-press exhibitions, the Stanbrook Abbey centenary at the V and A, or the Welsh Arts Council's Gregynog Press exhibition, now at Waterloo Place, the keynote is variety. One hundred and seventy-eight books and about twice as many ephemera can be seen, and just about every interest in text or type is represented. There can be no better way to look at what the presses are choosing to print and how they are going about it.

The exhibition is strongest on the technical side. Ian Mortimer, who chose the material from what the presses themselves sent, prints under I. M. Imprimit, and Michael Heseltine, who wrote the catalogue, is about to start his own press. Not surprisingly then, most space goes to details about the production of the books: the illustrations, type, paper, and so on. The catalogue is a brief reference book, which has drawn upon the invaluable bibliography, *Private Press Books*, published annually since 1959 by the Private Libraries Association.

First impressions of the exhibition come, of course, from the graphic work. Without doubt the best is from eighteenth and nineteenth-century plates. Contemporary illustration lags far behind. [illegible] Bain's Laverock Press is associated with marvellous impressions from Bewick woodcuts. His fine Gainsborough, Stubbs and Landseer impressions, made from the plates he rediscovered at the firm of Thomas Ross, are not shown, however, since they are produced under the John Boydell imprint. The ephemera by James Mosley, librarian of St Bride's, include Chiswick press blocks—a line or so of facsimile Caxton black-letter, and a Christmas card made from a canopied and pinnacled heraldic tomb by the wood-engraver, Orlando Jewitt, who was employed in drawing for the Archaeological Institute in the nineteenth century. In an entirely different style, John B. Easson at the Quarto Press has a flair for the Victorian burlesque. He includes a cartoon of an elephant coming to town, used as a change of address card.

Turning to the contemporary, the graphic work of Morris Cox at the Gogmagog Press is technically remarkable, but like his poetry, it is idiosyncratic. There is no doubt at all that contemporary work is most impressive in its typography and design. Much has already been written about the outstanding Cuckoo Hill Press. Among others, the most recently founded press, Cygnet, started at Burford in 1974, is continuing the same tradition of excellent typography.

In a handsome old wooden display case, borrowed for the occasion, the two oldest established presses are the centrepiece of the exhibition. The small group from Stanbrook Abbey emphasizes the highly accomplished, rather feminine press-work, set off by Margaret Adams's illuminated initials. On the other side of the case is the Rampant Lions Press, which began printing in 1929, and became full-time in 1948. It is not really a private press, although it shares many similar aims, and produces work of such a high standard that it would have been a pity to leave it out. Incidentally, the two-volume *The Story of Cupid and Psyche*, by William Morris, printed for Clover Hill in 1974, in Kelmscott Troy, is an unobtrusive reminder of the real origins of the private press movement.

There are plenty of records of local issues, such as the poster:

PLEASE
Keep bookbinding
at School of Art
STROUD

—Piccolo Press

But apart from the Polish propaganda sheets for the Socialist International in Brussels, 1964, there is little beyond the parish.

Turning to poetry: Poet and Printer (Alan Tarling), exists to print Peter Redgrove's work. Many good poets occasionally print at private presses: Michael Hamburger, Douglas Dunn, Roy and John Fuller at the family Sycamore Press and so on. Sylvia Plath's *Three Women*, 1968, must be one of the most commercially successful books of the Oficyna Stanislaw Gliwa, which also prints in Polish and Hungarian. Nevertheless, the impression left by this exhibition is that at present the private press is most interested in all aspects of the history of printing—and in printing for its own sake.

The portrayal of the Prophet

By Sarwat Okasha

Detail of the "Ascent of the Prophet to Heaven", attributable to Sultan-Muhammad, from the Khamsa *of Nizami, a sixteenth-century Safavid manuscript in the British Museum, reproduced in* Royal Persian Manuscripts *by Stuart Cary Welch (127pp. Thames and Hudson. Paperback, £4.50).*

It is widely accepted that religious painting did not find the same degree of encouragement in early Islam as it did in the worlds of Christendom and Buddhism. It is indeed true that we do not find mosques decorated with paintings of a religious nature, nor do we find painting used in the Islamic world for didactic or moral purposes until after the fourteenth century. However, in spite of the hostility of certain theologians and the rigidity of the puritan factions, there did gradually appear in Persia a certain number of religious features in Islamic painting. In fact, artists were commissioned to record a variety of religious scenes, and actually on occasion showed representations of the Prophet Muhammad. Figures of the Prophet, nevertheless, were of an extreme rarity if we compare them with figures of Christ in Christian painting. Those who were most rigorous in their prohibition of painting regarded such representations as sacrilegious imitations of the work of the Creator Himself, and this prohibition was particularly fanatically maintained in the case of the representation of holy figures. This paucity of pictures of the Prophet was motivated by extreme veneration rather than by rigid puritan feeling.

It should be noted that the moral authority of the theologians of Islam with regard to the status of painting did not extend as far as that of the Christians in all matters relating to faith and morals. In addition, with respect to iconography, there is no book anywhere in Islamic literature which has the same didactic purpose and prescriptive force as the *Iconographia* written by Panselinos, a monk on Mount Athos, which contained all the Church's directives for the Byzantine painters, nor anything like those guiding principles laid down by the Russian Church in the sixteenth century to be followed by painters of icons.

Whereas in Byzantine art, once the Iconoclast controversy had been settled, the forms of artistic expression were completely straightforward, in the Islamic world they were merely implicit. Therefore, whatever was painted by Muslim artists was not dominated by commitment to a set of rules, and it is extremely difficult to deduce true iconographic principles which Muslims accepted as conventions of their art. However, Richard Ettinghausen has been able to blaze a trail towards an understanding of those conventions with respect to representation of the unicorn and the symbol of the crescent.

Careful scrutiny of the evidence may yield a discovery of the conventions accepted by Muslim painters and a deeper knowledge of what they mean e.g in their representation of Buraq, the Prophet's steed, and their use of crescents as halos surrounding the head of the Prophet. Where the Gospels provided a rich source of iconographic inspiration to Christian painters from the earliest Christian times, this was not the case in Islam with regard to the Koran, for the large majority of Islamic thinkers found the whole idea of pictorial representation absolutely distasteful.

Before religious painting made its appearance in Islam, its didactic purposes had already been apparent in the Christian context. Compositions inspired by the Bible had been principally concerned with expressing a particular homiletic exhortation. The purpose of this was to give visible significance to the virtues in order to induce the worshipper to follow the Christian example. The main purpose of religious painting for Christians was a didactic one, not one related to the holiness of the picture itself.

The case in Islam was different, for the Koran is primarily a book of legal prescriptions, though divinely ordained; and the prophets are only human beings inspired by God, the Prophet Muhammad himself being regarded as "but a messenger, messengers the like of whom have passed away before him". While he is believed to be the Seal of the Prophets, he is none the less considered to be human, indistinguishable from other human beings but for the Divine Message which he bore. No Muslim may deify him or worship him. Therefore there is no basis for an analogy between the Prophet Muhammad, as regarded by all Muslims, and Jesus Christ, as conceived by Christians, except among the Monophysites who preached the doctrine of the single, divine nature of Christ. This sect forbade the pictorial representation of Jesus Christ, just as Muslims forbade the pictorial representation of God.

The spiritual and religious teachings of the Koran are clear and unmistakable and can be regarded as settled principles. This is why Muslims in the early years of Islam could not bring themselves to accept the idea of pictorial representation or of illustrations to the Koranic texts. The same difficulty occurred in showing scenes from the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. At first, however, illustrators were not averse to portraying the Prophet for this reason, but rather because of their veneration for his memory. A sign of this veneration can be seen in the use of the flaming nimbus round the head of the Prophet Muhammad and other prophets after the end of the fourteenth century, and in the veiling of his face at the end of the fifteenth century. In literature there have been many narrative accounts of some of the episodes mentioned in the Koran, such as the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, which became known as the *Tale of Yusef and Zulaykha*. However, with all the later accretions added to the story by the Sufis, and all the incidents attributed to the protagonists by the illustrators of the story, no true Muslim will regard this as other than a matter of artistic creation, having no connection whatsoever with matters of faith and religion.

Thomas Arnold and a number of other distinguished historians believed that religious painting in Islam was confined to the illustration of religious narrative relating to holy personages such as Muhammad, Jesus, Abraham and others. And yet, I would suggest, this was only one aspect of Islamic religious painting. Others included, first, the stimulation of an emotional response to the sacred image; second, the illustration of homiletic literature found so frequently in Persian Sufi texts; and, third, the inculcation of the fear of retribution in Hell and the desire to attain the bliss of Heaven through obedience to the Divine Will.

It is unlikely that there was any religious painting in the early years of the Islamic era, for there are no surviving examples that date back before the fourteenth century. Consequently, the painters had no traditions upon which to base themselves. There is evidence for the fact that Muslim as well as non-Muslim painters were in the habit of copying Christian religious pictures at the request of their Muslim masters for their own private purposes. In the case of Christian artists this could have been expected, but in cases where the artists were not Christian, there is also some certainty that they had Christian models before them.

The first extant examples of portraits of the Prophet are in a copy of *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* (Universal History) by Rashid-ad-Din, part of which is in the British Museum and part in the library of Edinburgh University. His history begins with Adam, then goes on to an account of the Jewish people. It also deals with the history of the Christian Franks to the extent that this subject might interest a Muslim. The writer has also paid special attention to the early history of the Persian monarchs. For illustrations he called upon artists from various places; among these were the painters of Tabriz, before whom he placed as models a number of pictures and illustrated scenes with a historical content. Clearly he put as much effort into assembling illustrations as into writing the text itself. It is a pity that, since there are no signatures to any of the illustrations in the manuscript, we cannot reach any conclusions about the nationality or religion of the artists.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century certain artistic manifestations appeared in the Islamic world which might be called by the name of religious painting, in the narrowest and most limited sense of the phrase. Moreover, it could be argued that the Mongol invasion was one of the factors which made this possible, just as it had equally far-reaching effects on a variety of other aspects of Islamic thought. In 1221, when the Mongols poured into the Middle East and into a large portion of the European continent, they were still a nomadic people unfamiliar with the ways of civilization and settled life. However, the new responsibilities of empire forced them to adopt the habits of a settled life, although the process took some time. Their beliefs might be described as vaguely agnostic, with the addition of a large dose of tolerance in religious matters. It was not long however before they adopted the beliefs and traditions of Muslim Persia in order to impress their rule on the religion of their newly conquered subjects.

In 1295 Ghazan Khan was converted to Islam. This was to be the beginning of a new interest in all things Persian and ancient Persian history, whether factual or mythical. This became particularly obvious when the Mongol kings claimed dynastic ties with the ancient kings of Persia, so that they should dispel any impression of their being a nation of unknown origin, deprived of the benefits of ancient tradition. This was accompanied by a proliferation of splendidly illuminated manuscripts dealing with the history and the ancient epic legends of Persia, of which Firdawsi's *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings) is the most sumptuous example.

Rashid-ad-Din wrote his *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* in 1306. By this time the Mongols had adopted Islam. Rashid-ad-Din was careful to point out that the Mongol empire was in fact a prolongation of the Islamic empire in the Middle East, and that the Mongol dynasty had filled the gap left by the murder of the last Abbasid Caliph in 1258 by Hulaku. He considered the consolidation of Mongol rule as a natural result of the movement of historical determinism and as a necessary guarantee of Islamic predominance.

Rashid-ad-Din's attitude to the Mongol empire was reflected in the illustrations to the book of *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* and to a copy of the *Athar al-Baqiya* (Permanent Memorials) of al-Biruni, which dates back to 1307. Both books include pictures of the Prophet Muhammad, and it has been said that these are the earliest representations of him.

These two copies of the *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* and the *Athar al-Baqiya* certainly include scenes taken from the Old Testament, as history begins in both cases with the story of Adam and his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The story of Jonah and the whale is also mentioned in both, although neither account is in exact agreement with the Koranic versions of the stories. Moreover, there are scenes taken from the Gospels. The life of the Prophet Muhammad is illustrated roughly in the same manner as in Byzantine art. In the *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* there are eight pictures representing him as a tall, slender man with well-modelled features, in addition to one which shows him as a newborn baby.

The pictures of the Prophet in the manuscript of the *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* are not without value, for they are the earliest known. They are not very different from the artist's other pictures; in other words, the Prophet is nowhere shown with a halo in order to distinguish him from other figures in the picture. On the other hand there is a copy of the *Athar al-Baqiya* dating back to 1307-1308 in the Edinburgh University library with pictures showing the Prophet with a halo. The circular halo is obviously derived from Christian art and from the Irano-Buddhist cultures of pre-Islamic Persia, which always used it as a distinguishing sign for those persons who were the object of special veneration, whether represented individually or in a group. It is clear that this halo lost its significance in Islamic art and became a mere decorative device placed around the heads of any figures.

It is noteworthy that the Islamic painter painted the Prophet Muhammad as taller than any other figures in his picture. This was the tradition in Persian painting at the end of the fourteenth and throughout the fifteenth centuries. This manner of portraying the Prophet and Joseph in the *Tale of Yusef and Zulaykha* in the manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* cannot strictly be called religious painting. The artist here has not regarded the Prophet as any other than a man of greater worth than other men. In the *Jami 'at-Tawarikh* the portraits of the Prophet contained none of those signs of veneration and glorification which generally attached themselves to paintings of Jesus Christ. Their only purpose was to be a record of those historical events in which the Prophet took part, and nothing more.

Persian artists, exclusively, presented the illustrations of the life of Prophet Muhammad in numerous manuscripts, e g, *Rawdat-al-Safa* (The Garden of Serenity) by Mir Khawand, *Qisas al-Anbiya* (Tales of the Prophet), which is a title used by a great number of writers for their books of religious and historical chronicles in the Islamic period, and *Khamsa* of Nizami, etc. More frequent were the pictures that show the Prophet seated among his Companions, in which the faces are individualized so that it is not necessary to single them out by name. This kind of picture was often used for didactic purposes by the Shi'ites on account of the distinctive attitudes given to Ali and to his two sons, Hasan and Husayn. One of the most beautiful collections of these illustrations can be found in the manuscript of a book called *Hirat al-Abrar* (The Dilemma of the Devout) written by Alishir Novai in 1485.

* * *

Where the developing style of portraying the prophet is concerned, pictures showing his features with any degree of completeness are rare indeed, dating back to an early period, such as the portraits in the *Jami 'at-Tawarikh*. Towards the end of the fourteenth century or, perhaps, slightly before, the portraits came to be distinguished by a luminous halo round his head, reminiscent of the halo shown in representations of the Buddha, such as that in the manuscript of the *Miraj Nameh* (The Book of the Ascension of the Prophet).

Towards the end of the sixteenth century there arose the tradition of painting a veil over his features, descending from his forehead to the tip of his beard. This was meant to express a sense of reverence for his person, or it could well have been a sop to the more puritanical theologians. An example of this is the picture of the Prophet with Abu Bakr and Ali in the manuscript copy of *Siyar an-Nabi* (Biographies of the Prophet). Another example is the miniature of the Prophet's journey by night in the manuscript copy of the *Tale of Yusef and Zulaykha* by the poet Gami and in the manuscript of the *Khamsa* by the poet Nizami. In all these pictures the Prophet is shown riding his steed, Al-Buraq. The sky around him is painted an attractive limpid blue occasionally covered with light golden cloud. The angels surround him, some bringing gifts, some scattering the pebbles of Paradise at his feet, some presenting him with the Green Robe of prophecy, and others swinging censers to perfume the air around him. The Archangel Gabriel is in the forefront, clearly hastening to meet him with an expression of great happiness at his arrival. Moreover in a manuscript dating back to the eighteenth century of *Al-Bustan* (The Garden) by the poet Sadi, there is a picture of him riding Al-Buraq and entirely enveloped in an ample veil.

It was after this that the artists took to expressing their reverence for the Prophet by not painting his body but representing him as a halo of light, as in the manuscript copy of *Hamlat Haydari* (The Campaign of Haydar). This is a long verse narrative which recounts the biography of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs. In all these pictures he is represented as a luminous halo, without any suggestion of the shape of his body. In the picture mentioned above he can be seen surrounded by the faithful of many races and from many countries, as symbolized by the varying fashions of the turbans.

Islam has given Jesus a very special place in its devotions, second only to the Prophet Muhammad. That is why there are so many portraits of Jesus in Islamic religious painting, especially as so many poets such as Nizami, Jalal-al-Din al-Rumi, Sa'di and others, frequently included stories about him in their poems. It is probable, in fact, that the Islamic religious painters may have kept Christian paintings of the life of Jesus or even possessed illustrated copies of the Gospels.

However, there were certainly no models for the Islamic painter in those cases where the Koranic narrative differed from that of the Gospels. Nizami's *Makhzan-al-Asrar*, Khwandamir's *History*, and *Qisas al-Anbiya* are enriched with a wide range of the most beautiful miniatures of the history of Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that these Persian illustrated manuscripts dealt with the lives of most prophets from Noah to Abraham and from Moses to Solomon.

Visual art is more than beauty; it surpasses expression and takes precedence over all oral and auditory experience. The latter does not even at best embody all the deeper emotions, whereas one line by a painter may contain them all. When a painting emerges as a true expression of emotions and sensibilities, it embodies what could not be dealt with in verbal terms or even orally, for, the self's inner workings may be beyond any medium of expression except that of the brush of a creative artist. It is the painting that is truly expressive where the word falls short.

The Cairo manuscript of the *Rawdat-al-Safa* (The Garden of Serenity) contains a scene in which spirituality is revealed in its most dignified and minutest form. Here we see the Prophet withdrawn into seclusion from the world before being chosen for his prophetic mission in the Hara' cave where he spent long nights in fervent prayer. It was through these prayers and devotion that his soul attained serenity in preparation for receiving his Lord's message. Souls are stirred and shaken when they are reminded of what could rid them of life's defilement and exalt them to purity of spirit; how much more stirred when they realize what it is that urges them towards that purity and spiritual austerity which inspired the Prophet's companions in the 'Hara' cave!

The best of these manuscript illustrations is perhaps that representing a farewell scene to the most beloved of mortals. This illustration of the Last Pilgrimage, in which the Prophet announced his own death, represents a time when Muslims felt that Muhammad would not return to them again. Death held no fear for the Prophet, for he believed he would meet his Creator, but the Muslims felt that they were to be separated from their support, their Prophet and the spiritual strength which nourished their souls, the loss of which filled them with terror.

* * *

Islamic painting settled down after its uncertain start. When at last it found its true vocation it abundantly produced works of art dealing with a variety of subjects. In those paintings, with which we have already dealt, relating to the stories of prophets and the stirring of emotions and feelings, we see how powerful the effect of the Muslim painter could be.

There was also another aspect which we must not neglect, and which is no less important than the previous two, a field in which the painter was immensely creative, that of didactic art. The heroes of these pictures are either real or legendary characters. The painter finds in books whatever stirs his imagination and inspires his intuition. This genre embodies a moral lesson or guiding example that appeals to the painter; he then reproduces it in painting that is expressive of his intuitions, feelings and sentiments. There are many pictures of this kind, some of which I have mentioned, while others appear to be unpublished.

Didacticism is as ancient as the Islamic religion. It appears in different ages through media which differed in colour and form. Some of it has come down to us in the form of proverbs, some under the guise of wise sayings, while some was adapted to allegorical stories about animals and birds. Some stories were connected with actual events, others belonged to legend. However, this heritage was sparse and scattered and did not appear in full strength and vigour until the age of mysticism. The author would bring in whatever he thought fitting, sometimes confining himself to realism, at other times adding touches of imagination, and lastly pointing out the moral to be drawn from the story.

Painting and writing are twin arts, and what interests us here is their inseparability. The dual success of both arts at the same time started to appear when the didactic story flourished. Just as the storyteller drew his eloquence from both elements, so did the painter. And if the emergence of mystical stories with their many events relied on both elements, the same applied to art, in which we find the storytellers fostering artistic creativity. [illegible] say that didactic painting, particularly in Muslim Persia, acquired power and repute with the emergence of religious stories. Before then, we find only rare and unrepresentative examples, not enough to help us in assessing didactic painting. Among the renowned mystics around whom so many of these stories were woven, Farid-al-Din, Al-Attar al-Nishapuri and Jalal-al-Din al-Rumi are preeminent.

Al-Attar's life was the only source from which the painters drew a moral lesson; there are apparently no works about the lives of his fellow mystics. Among Al-Attar's works are *Tadhkirat al-Awliya'* (The Holy Men's reminder) and *Mantiq al-Tayr* (Conference of the Birds). This describes a journey undertaken by the birds under the leadership of the Hoopoe, and their struggle to cross the Seven Valleys in order to reach the Simurgh (a legendary bird) on Mount Qaf which was said to surround the world, and thus to secure immortality. Through this verse allegory Al-Attar was representing the Gnostic sages, and their arduous training for the attainment of perfection. The poets aimed to lighten the moral lessons embodied in such narratives.

Most famous among these stories is the story of Shaikh Sanaan. Al-Attar includes it in his *Mantiq al-Tayr* in a Persian poetic rendering. It is also related in several other sources, in which Sanaan is sometimes named Abdul-Razak and sometimes Sanaan. The story as it appears in *Mantiq al-Tayr* describes Shaikh Sanaan as the chief scholar of his age in knowledge and nobility of character. He is described as a man who has made the Pilgrimage fifty times and stayed by the Holy Sanctuary for fifty years. His disciples numbered 400. They learnt his teachings and followed in his footsteps. He is said once to have dreamt that he visited the East Roman Empire and knelt to idols in adoration. On his awaking, he decided to go to Christendom to seek the interpretation of his dream.

He then started on his journey, followed by his disciples. During their travels, the Shaikh saw an enchanting Christian girl looking down from her balcony. He was struck by her beauty, and so much attracted to her that he decided to settle near her, choosing to remain under her balcony. One can see how Persian painters found in this story a source of inspiration, letting their brushes produce works of art that are no less enthralling than the poetic text.

These pictures are powerful and effective creations, full of imagination, drawing on the painter's own knowledge of mystics. All the details of the scenes are expressive of piety, even the rather sad atmosphere. Perhaps the painter's most creative achievement is the moral significance inherent in his portrayals.

The second eminent mystic is Jalal-al-Din Muhammad al-Balkhi al-Rumi, who lived in Anatolia in the thirteenth century. Among his works the long poem *Al-Mathnawi* is outstanding. Jalal-al-Din al-Rumi's poems embody a moral code for his disciples to follow. We can scarcely find one single aspect of human life, behaviour or relationships that has not been treated by Jalal-al-Din with a spiritual insight that proves deep into the heart, preaching and guiding, sometimes in an ironical way. The copy of his *Mathnawi* to which I have already referred is an unpublished manuscript kept in the Cairo Museum of Islamic Art. It contains six miniatures illustrating some of the stories in this poetical composition.

Perhaps providing the greatest scope for the Islamic painter's imagination, a field in which he formidably excels, is the depiction of Hell as a threat of torment and Paradise as an alluring reward. Numerous scenes from Paradise attract the viewer with the hope of an after-life. Books, both religious and descriptive, are full of pictures of Paradise with its rivers of milk and honey, its palm trees and vines, its towering palaces, its nymphs and all the promised rewards that attract the eye and play upon the senses. Furthermore, numerous descriptions of Hell describe its eternal torments, abounding with horrifying descriptions designed to terrify the boldest of hearts: of fierce devils, tortured sinners whose food is fiery lava and whose bodies are bathed in fire, who are threatened with having their flesh renewed whenever eternal fire has eaten away their bodies, crying out for help to no avail. Paradise has images of merciful angels serving its occupants with the softest of words, while in Hell the devils with their deformed hideous faces and mutilated physiques inflict hellish suffering on worldly sinners. There are also depictions of the Prophet's *Mi'raj*, his miraculous ascent to heaven.

There is a fine manuscript of the *Mi'raj* in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, written nearly a century after the Bahram Mirza album in Istanbul, which also includes a number of the *Mi'raj*'s illustrations. It abounds in pictures of the Prophet, the Buraq and the Archangel Gabriel touring the Seven Heavens and Paradise, as well as others of Hell. They are the most brilliant realizations that we possess of Islamic mysticism, belonging to an age when the spiritual nature of Islam was intensely felt, and inspired artists to produce works of immortal value. The illustrations in this manuscript are considered the most important and rarest miniatures illustrating Paradise and Hell, as well as themes of resurrection and the Last Judgment. The splendour of religious feeling has seldom been so gloriously represented as it is in the portrayal of the Ascension as that wonderful starry night.

Rebellion in Perak

By A. C. Milner

P. L. BURNS and C. D. COWAN (Editors):
Sir Frank Swettenham's Malayan Journals 1874-1876
347pp. Oxford University Press. £19.

No period of Malaysian history has received so much scholarly attention in the past two decades as the mid-1870s. At that time the British government placed Residents in certain of the western Peninsular states, and although the degree of control these officials would exercise over the indigenous governments was a matter of debate, those who opposed the European advance were, as Swettenham later explained, "taught a lesson" by "force of arms". For many Malaysian historians these events mark the beginning of the colonial period; students of Imperial history see in them an opportunity to examine the development and implementation of new British policies.

Sir Frank Swettenham's Malayan Journals 1874-1876 is a personal record of the months from January 1874, when the Perak chiefs agreed to accept a British Resident whose advice was to be "asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom", to the Perak uprising at the end of 1875. Seven of the journals are not reprints but appear for the first time; the other five were published by the Malaysian branch of the Royal Asiatic Society twenty-five years ago. Swettenham is one of the two or three major figures of British Malayan history; his official activities ranged from interpreter to High Commissioner to the Malay States, and he lived to criticize the Malayan Union scheme of 1945. He wrote the journals as a young officer, and they describe the missions he undertook to Perak and other states, and his work as an adviser in Selangor.

For the general reader the journals will be less appealing than Swettenham's later writings on the period, some of which have been republished in the same Oxford in Asia series. Perhaps because the journals were not intended for publication, they are somewhat tedious and their descriptions of social and economic conditions in Malay states compare unfavourably with, for instance, that in John Anderson's *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra in 1823* (also reprinted by Oxford). For many readers the editors' thorough annotation will be the most attractive feature of the book. It includes not only biographies of numerous figures who are mentioned rather than described by Swettenham, but also gives details from archival materials relating to the principal events.

In spite of their limitations, the journals offer interesting glimpses of the Malay Peninsula at that time. Kuala Lumpur, for example, surrounded by "acres and acres" of Malay plantations, is described as "by far the best mining village I have seen", and the editors have included Swettenham's sketch of the town, with its Malay and Chinese quarters. The brief report on the East Coast states is also useful: Trengganu's "very flourishing" town and Pahang's "exceedingly well dressed" Malays are a reminder that the West Coast states were not always the most "advanced".

But the student of nineteenth-century Malaysian history will value Swettenham's journals most of all for their account of British intervention. We learn not only of information in London and decision-making in Singapore but of the frustrations and hopes of the "man on the spot". Swettenham records the difficulties he encountered when attempting to establish British authority: he asked "numberless times for the Sultan and Raja Kahar to clear out the posse around the stockade without their doing anything for me"; and when he fined a "Bugis Haji", the man hoped he could "get out of the fine by talking the Sultan over". Swettenham became increasingly irritated with the Rajas who defended their actions in terms of *adat Melayu*, or "Malay custom", which acted as "a very 'fig leaf of pretence' to cover the exactions, oppressions and cruelties which they heap on a long suffering people". In August, 1875, he described the injustices of Perak as "a travesty on the 'English Protection' under which the Native states flourish". In November, he complained to two Malay Rajas about "the infamous way" in which they treated their people, and joined the Resident of Perak, J. W. W. Birch, in posting proclamations declaring the new British policy that "Her Majesty's Government would henceforth govern Perak". On the fourth of the month news arrived that the Resident had been murdered and that the "Malays are now waiting at Passir Sulak for me for they say I am 10 times worse than Mr Birch".

The journals, therefore, tell us a good deal about the mood in the British camp in the months before the uprising. They are less helpful regarding Malay perspectives on these events. Swettenham does mention the horror of one Perak dignitary on being told the state's British advisers were to be answerable not to the Sultan, but the Governor, and the same man is quoted as fearing that the Resident might give Perak "laws of his own making" rather than follow the rules of immemorial custom. Swettenham also notes the way Birch gave a Malay chief "before the crowd a blowing up which I think he will remember", and sixteen months later remarks that the most cowardly Malay will "be raised to frightful vengeance if he has been abused before others". But such comments as these are infrequent. It is not simply that Swettenham was less concerned, for instance, than his contemporary Hugh Clifford, to describe the Malay point of view. He was inexperienced in these years, and the journals convey the impression that had he been more knowledgeable and more patient, the uprising of 1875 may not have been as inevitable as [illegible]

Catastrophe in Kabul

By Helen White

LIEUT VINCENT EYRE:
Journal of an Afghanistan Prisoner
Introduction by James Lunt
Illustrated by Frank Wilson
330pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £5.95.

If Dr Brydon, limping into Jalalabad, had really been the only survivor of the British force which occupied Kabul in the first Afghan war, English readers after 1842 would have missed a great deal. But many others, hostages or captives of the Afghans, not to mention those who came away before the final disaster, also survived and were keen to tell the tale. Brydon's own account ran to less than a dozen pages, helpfully reprinted in 1969 with Patrick Macrory's edition of *Lady Sale's Journal*, which that hardy memsahib rushed into print in 1843, and which stands as a monument to the officer's wife as camp follower.

From the ranker's point of view, Sita Ram's *From Sepoy to Subedar* included an account of capture and slavery in Afghanistan. James Lunt's elegant new edition of Colonel Norgate's translation (1873) from the Hindi appeared in 1970. Now Routledge and Kegan Paul give us a reprint of the diary and journal of another prisoner, Lieutenant Vincent Eyre of the Bengal Artillery, also published hastily in 1843. General Lunt's very brief introduction provides a little of the background information [illegible] "catastrophe" which found a ready outlet in the following decade.

The incompetence and compounded folly which brought disaster to a dubiously useful enterprise had, and still has, an appalling fascination. No student, no general reader hooked by it will complain that these sources are becoming easily available again. But he will hope that someone will yet try to redress the imbalance arising from the fact that almost all the history we have is presented from the British side. Not that the major British accounts are in any obvious way unfair to the Afghan adversary. Sir John Kaye's meticulous *History of the War in Afghanistan* (1851) gives credit for bravery, generosity and statesmanship on the Afghan side, and the tradition in fiction, from Maud Diver and G. A. Henty to Flashman's adventures, reflects this theme as well as that of treachery and cruelty. But the recognition of British policy as essentially, from the Afghan point of view, aggressive and double-dealing, is understandably intermittent.

We get closer to impartiality with Mohun Lall's account of several episodes in the life of Dost Mohamed. An Indian employed by "Bokhara" Burnes as a secretary, he acted as go-between for the unlucky envoy Macnaghten in negotiation with the Afghan chiefs. It is significant that the only only substantial Afghan history of the period available in translation (into Russian), by Said Qasim Rishtiya, draws heavily on Mohun Lall.

Rishtiya also refers to other works in Persian by Afghan authors; these appear to be little more than uncritical narratives, mainly for school use; but there is [illegible] Kabul in 1963, collected some highly confused oral material on the first and second Afghan wars. It includes uncomplimentary allegations about British behaviour: "Many of the officers on horseback rode away from their men. And their men tried to shoot them down, but some escaped." Macrory dismisses that as doubtful testimony. But such vivid detail could well reflect an unbroken oral tradition, and a fact which the British survivors would have had a particularly strong motive for suppressing or repressing, although, to be fair, "they did not shrink from numerous other damaging admissions, and criticism of the general imbecility of British military behaviour.

After more than a century, it must be accepted that there are no records on the Afghan side to match the prolific British material, and that the historian, putting aside blanket charges of incorrigible treachery, must seek out scattered clues to Afghan intentions, as distinct from a muddled but ruthless attempt to end at any price the foreign intervention.

Little of the horror comes through in Frank Wilson's playfully nostalgic drawings from contemporary sketches or watercolours, with some which look like illustrations from the *BOP* or *Hotspur*. It is more comfortable now to see the disgraceful episode as a fantastic adventure. But as General Lunt reminds us, it was the most humiliating defeat for Britain in Asia until Singapore fell to the Japanese, and it sowed the seeds of the Indian Mutiny. The title *Journal of an Afghanistan Prisoner* is less grammatical, and less [illegible] than Eyre's original: "The Military Operations at Cabul, which ended in the Retreat and Destruction of the British Army, January 1842. With a Journal of imprisonment in Affghanistan [illegible]

The hand also rises

By J. S. Atherton

JOHN MONK SAUNDERS:
Single Lady
397pp. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. $8.95.

John Monk Saunders wrote the scripts of the Hollywood successes *The Dawn Patrol* and *A Yank at Oxford*; his novel *Single Lady* was serialized in *Liberty* in 1930, published in book form in 1931, flopped as a Broadway musical and was screened with some success as *The Last Flight*. The series in which it now reappears was started in the belief that "one of the functions of a university press is to rescue good writing from oblivion", but, as Stephen Longstreet hints in his afterword to the book, *Single Lady* is not an example of good writing although he found it pleasant enough light reading. The interest lies perhaps in the circumstances in which it was written. There is a possible parallel with the case of Fay Wray, the actress to whom Saunders was married for some years and who is remembered for being waved above the New York skyline by King Kong, for there too the interest was in the situation rather than the performance.

Monk Saunders, like his hero Cary Lockwood, was born in Minnesota in the 1890s, served as an air-force pilot in the war and afterwards was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He was in Paris in the 1920s "on the fringe", Mr Longstreet says, "of the Hemingway-Stein circle", moving to Lisbon to write *Single Lady* which is set in Paris and Portugal with a brief trip to Madrid to allow one of the characters to be gored in a bullring. The people and places obviously derive from Hemingway, although it is only the hero's hands which have been mutilated. Nikki, the "single lady", who is the stand-in for Lady Ashley, although without a title has $48,000 and is escorted with chivalrous devotion by Cary and his four ex-airmen buddies around all the better-known bars in a Paris almost devoid of other inhabitants:

> Nikki looked so lovely they decided to take her to the Ritz for cocktails.
>
> At the Ritz they had a lot of dry Martinis and smoked any number of cigarettes. While Shep was talking, Nikki interrupted to inquire of Johnnie, who was sitting beside her on the wall seat: "Just what are your plans?"
>
> Johnnie blushed and withdrew his hand from beneath the table.
>
> They all looked at him severely.
>
> "You have to watch that lad", Shep said. "He's head of the Wandering Hand Society and he has a groping good time. You wouldn't begrudge him a few free feels, would you, Nikki?"
>
> But Bill was sore. "You know better than that", he told Johnnie.

There is a juvenile, or perhaps adolescent, flavour about all the first part of the book, and sex is never allowed to go any further.

The second part begins with all the buddies tagging along with Cary who has decided to make a fortune salvaging diamonds from ships wrecked off the Portuguese coast. The thirty-hour train journey to Lisbon is described in convincing detail, as are visits to a sardine-canning factory and a Portuguese bullfight. When the diamonds prove elusive Cary begins to collect eighteenth-century English bracket-clocks, which can be bought cheaply in the coastal villages because they have stopped going. Some names of real clock-makers are given and many passages have an air of reality which goes oddly with the rest of the book. The Portuguese people and the landscape are described with obvious affection, but unfortunately they are not allowed much space in the story. Instead of showing us more of "the full-blooded vitality of the Portuguese peasantry" which had obviously impressed him, Monk Saunders rapidly disposes of all his characters except Cary and Nikki by violent means and sends his two survivors back to their hotel in Paris.

He would undoubtedly have been a better writer if he had relied less on Hemingway and more on his own experience, for his best writing appeared in the few leisurely and luminous descriptive passages he allowed himself, completely unlike Hemingway's succinct narratives. Had he continued to write he might have given us some minor masterpiece similar to Eugène Fromentin's *Dominique*, but sadly he drifted to and then away from Hollywood and in 1940 put an end to his own life.

For the birds

By John Butt

JULIAN RATHBONE:
Carnival
220pp. Michael Joseph. £3.95.

This thriller set in post-Franco Spain must be the first of its kind. Modern Spain sets a number of alluring traps for the novelist, and Julian Rathbone walks cheerfully into all of them—bullfights, revolutionaries, fiestas, honour and hot-blooded ladies. Nevertheless, he manages to mix the standard ingredients into an oddly touching brew. "Shed", a green ex-academic, a drunken Irish journalist, a don't-mind-if-I-do retired English major, and a Texan who keeps forgetting not to talk Etonian, are making a documentary on Wellington. While filming near the Portuguese border they witness the murder of a well-known Spanish socialist. Their knowledge lands them in difficulties with Civil Guards, landowners and a shady counter-revolutionary conspiracy. A bad business, made much worse by the hero's involvement with the local bull-breeder's wife.

After a shaky start, the story moves towards an exciting climax. Mr Rathbone's knowledge of Spanish life and language is accurate, his enthusiasm for them unbounded. But times have changed in the country which gave us Don Juan, *Blood and Sand* and the novels of Hemingway. The Peninsula was once a field for grim, lean, passionate idealists who slept under the stars. This lot are adventurers of our own times: your two-star demi-pension sort, all open-neck shirts and sandals, here for the *vino* and the local colour. "Shed" is not a poet of the revolution, but a respectable young Englishman interested in rare birds, the Peninsular War and his host's wife, very much in that order. The events of the novel seem incongruous in this context, the sort of nightmare imbroglio every package tourer would like to insure against, but the blend of the romantic and the pedestrian is probably a fair reflection of the realities of the country, no land of heroes as it used to be, and "Shed" perfectly expresses this truth. He pales at the thought of violence, and is much more at home with his history and ornithology than where the bullets fly or in his mistress's arms. When the latter proposes a picnic in the nude, "her skin like ivory, her hair like flame", he grabs for his binoculars: "when would I ever see a Golden Eagle again?" When she announces she will spend this night asleep in her own room, he comments: "it may sound unromantic, but I can't say I missed her". Very much a Spaniard's idea of an Englishman.

Crossed wires

By Frank Pike

JACK TREVOR STORY:
Morag's Flying Fortress
174pp. Hutchinson £3.75.

Round about page 69 of this confidently written, fluent but ultimately maddening thriller, Jack Trevor Story seems to decide to paint himself into a corner:

> What I most dislike and mistrust in fiction as opposed to technical books or biographies . . . is that the events seem to have logical order, precise significance, the story *unfolds*; the personae wait in the wings. Not so with what I am trying to set down here. . . .

Fair warning. By page 107 we have progressed to: "A number of things run into each other here. If I separate them it will be for the sake of clarity. I don't intend to begin to be clear. This is how one gets one's emphases wrong." Narrator talking, of course, not author. But still a betraying (or would-be disarming?) paragraph.

Alec Ranger is an automation-electronics engineer of international standing; during a visit to a Polish neurological research institute he is unknowingly programmed (the "Gdansk effect"), through negative feedback encephalography (Mr Story is also a member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers) to — well, to do what isn't clear, but MI6 reckon it affects the safety of the realm. Somehow he sort of gets half-unprogrammed as a result of the emotional shock of his girlfriend of five years leaving him. The events of the narrative are all part of a conspiracy by everyone involved (old college chums, old girlfriends, chance acquaintances) to complete the process. So it turns out that Geoffrey Neasden, technical editor, contemporary at the Poly in the 1950s and husband of ex-girlfriend, his employer sinister publisher Ragusson ("You remember Ragusson? Write him in blue in the margin"), the pneumatic barmaid at their favourite wine-bar, not to mention the manager, with all the richly plausible circumstantial detail, are in league to enable Alec to face "the great schism. Between what I did not understand and what I was beginning to understand. It had to do with time slips and three echoes and triple vision."

Is the practised effrontery of the narrative technique—the false trails, the conniving with the reader, the blinding-with-science, the barefaced contrivance, the *persona ex machina*—so outrageous as to deserve getting away with? Probably. Is the corner duly painted out of? Not possible; but the attempt is entertaining to watch, provided you're not too interested in the result. The significance of the title is, as they say, beyond the scope of this review.

Ace of spuds

By David Wilson

LIONEL DAVIDSON:
The Sun Chemist
273pp. Cape. £3.95.

What looks like a contrivance of fiction, but could only have happened in real life, haunts Lionel Davidson's new novel. Researching his plot in Israel, where he lives, Mr Davidson discovered that what he was proposing as a historical invention—a bizarre conjunction of sweet potatoes, missing correspondence and a possible solution to the world's oil crisis—was remarkably close to historical fact. He decided to incorporate the unexpected coincidence, confirmed for him by Israeli scientists, into the novel. Mr Davidson is a resourceful as well as an eclectic writer.

The key figure in this conundrum is Chaim Weizmann, founder and former president of Israel. It appears that Weizmann, a chemist as well as a politician, had hit upon a way of producing high octane fuel by a process of fermentation; it would mean that oil could be grown rather than extracted and any country could grow it. The novel's way into this is intriguingly circuitous. Igor Druyanov, a Russian-born historian now living in London, is editing the volume of Weizmann's letters written in the early 1930s when he was ousted from the leadership of world Zionism and found his way back to science. The political intrigue which darkens Druyanov's seemingly innocuous task becomes apparent when his garrulous research assistant is knocked on the head in Swiss Cottage. Mr Davidson then leaves this bit of the plot to germinate in the reader's mind while he switches the narrative to Israel and the deciphering of the scientific mystery.

Expertly balancing plot, character and place, the novel proceeds in the best detective story tradition, the necessary technical detail leavened by a wry humour. Lodged in Weizmann's house, where the telephone system remains an unsolved mystery and the central heating has long been switched off, Druyanov uneasily surveys the relics of the man a segment of whose life he is piecing together from scraps of yellowing paper. The crucial evidence hinges on the fact that Weizmann lisped without his false teeth so that a passage in a memo was cryptically transcribed by his secretary as a request for chutney. Druyanov works this out while sharing Weizmann's bed with a Finnish professor of mathematics. A master of narrative artifice, Mr Davidson plants clues by stealth, ensuring that at no point is the reader ahead of the characters in the disentangling of the plot.

Smug's game

By Susan Kennedy

JANE GILLESPIE:
Latter-Day Dora
222pp. Peter Davies. £3.50.

Jane Gillespie's regular incursions into the middle-class domestic battlefield—twenty-two novels are listed on the verso of the title-page—are of the kind that reviewers often label "perceptive" and "intelligent". Her art is in mapping out, coolly and accurately, the fiercely disputed no-man's-lands of family relationships under stress. The settings for her books are of great importance; whether located in town or country, place and season play a subtly stressed part in precipitating crisis.

Here she takes us to the Lake District. Debby, the elder daughter, in trouble with the police after a brief attempt to make her own life in London, has been returned to the care of her family. Her impenetrable and sullen silence—the nature of her malaise remains imprecise—splits wide open the complacent pretences of the lifestyle that her father Alan's need to establish himself as a poet and novelist has forced on his wife and daughters (the novel's title makes rather contrived and grandiose reference to Wordsworth's household of women). As each member manoeuvres for individual space, the separating hedges spring up: Alan must face up to the question of what his writing is worth, Judy must come to terms with the insecurity that has led her to press food and concern on her family. In the conclusion it is the younger daughter, a graceless and podgy twelve-year-old, who seems to hold the rest to ransom and yet, perversely, acts with consistent honesty.

The blurb-writer is less than fair in suggesting that the 'Dringe' situation is "a microcosm of the conflicts that beset millions of households in our times". Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way, and Miss Gillespie's characters are far from being stereotypes, their problems far from generalized. She is too good a writer for that, acutely aware of the peculiar trappings and furniture that make up the individual, of the influence that the personal landscape of our lives has in determining emotional response. The trouble is that having judged correctly that this is where her strength lies, she is content to remain there. Her novels are consistently enjoyable, always polished, but it would be good in the future to see her extending her reach.

The worm turns

By Anne Barnes

HENRIE MAYNE:
An Unreasonable Man
275pp. Quartet, £4.50.

Even the most conventional eccentricity is a finely balanced condition. Its inflexibility makes it infuriating in private and very funny in public and a complete picture must take in these two things in exactly the right proportions; a moment of doubt on the part of the observer and the point is lost. The account here of Arthur Boyne, an unreasonable man, does not falter. His life spans the heyday of the British Raj in 1890 and both world wars, and the social changes and upheavals involved prop up the development of his character.

The plot is often deliberately absurd. In his childhood his father commits suicide by cutting his throat but fortunately leaves behind him papers which reveal ducal connections that make it possible for Arthur's education to proceed brilliantly enough to pitch him into the Indian Civil Service. He is good at India and enjoys it but he is bad at marriage and loathes the social trivialities which threaten to claim his time. A recurrent illness provides the only escape route. He invents one to suit his requirements—a rare tropical microbe, invisible except through a powerful microscope, which he refers to as his "worm". This gives him a cosy retreat from domestic pressure, some solicitude—at first—from his wife, and a lifelong hobby. The story races through the birth and upbringing of his five children, his retirement from India and his involvement in the First World War, during which at first he lies in bed knitting socks for the troops, then heroically drives an ambulance and finally takes charge of all Red Cross operations in Europe. This is his happiest hour. When it is over he returns energetically to the pursuit of ill-health and to occupations such as gardening, cooking, cycling and restless travel.

Some of the early parts of the story are rather flat but later the varied account of family life and conversations is precise and witty. All in all it is an affectionate portrait of a likable man, and a funny one. Henrie Mayne treats him sardonically and rather breezily but at the very moment when he is being most exasperating to his wife and children he is allowed to appear somehow less absurd than they are. What, after all, could be a wiser, more rational course for a hard-pressed family man than to present himself as thoroughly unreasonable and stick to it?

Trailing west

EVAN HUNTER:
The Chisholms
208pp. Hamish Hamilton. £3.75.

Evan Hunter, rather better known by his pseudonym of Ed McBain, here turns his hand to the genre of the Western. Unfortunately, he brings nothing original to the field, if you except some fashionably explicit sexual detail. He writes about a Virginian family of two daughters, three brothers and two parents, who undertake the perilous covered-wagon trail west in 1844. Each member of the Chisholm family has a chapter devoted to his or her fortunes, and these fortunes are as stock as the costumes hanging in a Hollywood studio.

The Chisholms have adventures and troubles on their travels; one daughter is killed by Indians, and the rest grow a little older, and wiser. It is hard to imagine how more emotional clichés could be stuffed between two book covers: parents love their children and, unsurprisingly, grieve when they are killed; adolescent girls are seduced and betrayed by older men; Indians are really just people with feelings like white folk; life is tough but the dream of a happier future lures us on to confront its dangers.

Matthew Hoffman

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